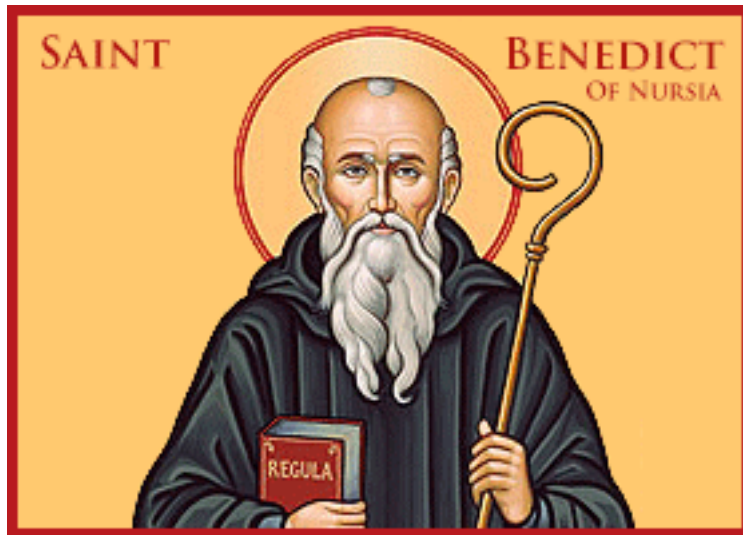


# The Rule of Saint Benedict



## A Paraphrase by

The Ven. William G. McLoughlin  
for  
The Fellowship of Saint Benedict



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## The Prologue

*Listen, my son, to the precepts of the master, and incline to them with the ear of your heart. Cheerfully receive and put into practice the admonitions of your loving Father; <sup>2</sup>that by the labor of obedience you may return to Him from whom by the sloth of disobedience you have gone astray. <sup>3</sup>To you, therefore, my message is now directed, who, giving up your own will once and for all, take up the strong and most excellent weapons of obedience to do battle for Christ the Lord, the true King.*

*<sup>4</sup>In the first place, each time you seek to begin a good work, earnestly pray that He will perfect whatever good you begin, <sup>5</sup>in order that He who is pleased to count us as His children, need never be grieved at our evil deeds. <sup>6</sup>For we ought at all times to obey Him, serving Him with the good things which He has given us, that He may not, like an angry father, disinherit his children, <sup>7</sup>nor, like a dread lord, enraged by our evil deeds, hand us over to everlasting punishment as most wicked servants, who would not follow Him to glory.*

*<sup>8</sup>Let us then rise at long last, since the Scriptures rouse us, saying: “It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep” (Rom 13:11); <sup>9</sup>and having opened our eyes to the light that comes from God, let us hear with our ears what the divine voice admonishes us, crying out daily: <sup>10</sup>“Today, if you would hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Ps 94[95]:8). <sup>11</sup>And again: “He who has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev 2:7). <sup>12</sup>And what does He say?—“Come, children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord” (Ps 33[34]:12). <sup>13</sup>“Run while you have the light of life, that the darkness of death may not overtake you” (Jn 12:35).*

*<sup>14</sup>Seeking His workman in the multitude of the people, the Lord proclaims these words, saying again: <sup>15</sup>“Who is the man that desires life and covets many days” (Ps 33[34]:13)? <sup>16</sup>If hearing this you answer, “I am he,” then God says to you: <sup>17</sup>“If you will have true and everlasting life, keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit; turn away from evil and do good; seek after peace and pursue it” (Ps 33[34]:14-15). <sup>18</sup>And when you have done these things, My “eyes shall be upon you, and My ears unto your prayers. And before you shall call upon me I will say: ‘Behold, I am here’” (Is 58:9). <sup>19</sup>What, dear brothers, can be sweeter to us than this voice of the Lord inviting us? <sup>20</sup>See, in His loving kindness, the Lord shows us the way of life. <sup>21</sup>Therefore, clothed with faith and the performance of good works, let us walk in His Way under the guidance of the Gospel, that we may be found worthy of seeing Him who has called us into His kingdom (cf 1 Thess 2:12).*

*<sup>22</sup>If we desire to dwell in the tabernacle of His kingdom, we cannot reach it in any way, unless we run there by doing good deeds. <sup>23</sup>But let us ask the Lord with the Prophet, saying to Him: “Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest on Thy holy hill” (Ps 14[15]:1)? <sup>24</sup>After this question, brothers, let us listen to the Lord’s answer as He shows us the way to this tabernacle. <sup>25</sup>“He who walks blamelessly, and does what is right; <sup>26</sup>who speaks truth from his heart; who does not slander with his tongue, <sup>27</sup>nor does evil to his friend, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor” (Ps 14[15]:2-3). <sup>28</sup>He*

has brought to nothing the foul demon tempting him, casting him out of his heart, and has taken his evil thoughts while they were yet new and dashed them against Christ (cf Ps 14[15]:4; Ps 136[137]:9). <sup>29</sup>These people, fearing the Lord, are not puffed up by their goodness of life, rather holding that any actual good which is in them cannot be done by themselves, but by the Lord. <sup>30</sup>They praise the Lord working in them (cf Ps 14[15]:4), and say with the Prophet: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory” (Ps 113[115]:1:9). <sup>31</sup>Thus, in the same way, the Apostle Paul has not taken credit for his preaching, saying: “By the grace of God, I am what I am” (1 Cor 15:10). <sup>32</sup>And again he says: “He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord” (2 Cor 10:17). <sup>33</sup>Hence, the Lord also says in the Gospel: “He who hears these words of Mine and does them, is like a wise man who built his house upon a rock; <sup>34</sup>the floods came, the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock” (Mt 7:24-25).

<sup>35</sup>Having fulfilled these words, the Lord waits for us daily to respond to His holy admonitions by our works. <sup>36</sup>Therefore, the number of our days is lengthened by a truce for the amendment of our misdeeds. <sup>37</sup>As the Apostle says: “Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (Rom 2:4)? <sup>38</sup>For the Lord says: “I do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he turn back to Me and live” (Ezek 33:11).

<sup>39</sup>Brothers, now that we have asked the Lord who it is that shall dwell in His tabernacle, we have heard the conditions for dwelling there; and if we fulfill the duties of tenants, <sup>40</sup>we shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Our hearts and our bodies must, therefore, be ready to do battle in holy obedience to His instruction. <sup>41</sup>And let us ask the Lord to supply by the help of His grace what is impossible to us by nature. <sup>42</sup>If we desire to reach life everlasting, avoiding the pains of hell, <sup>43</sup>then, while there is yet time, and we are still in the flesh, and are able during the present life to fulfill all these things by the Light of Life, <sup>44</sup>we must run to do now what will profit us forever.

<sup>45</sup>We, therefore, intend to found a school for the Lord’s service. <sup>46</sup>In drawing up the regulations, we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome. <sup>47</sup>But even if, to correct vices or to preserve love for one another, we are prompted to a little strictness, <sup>48</sup>do not be quickly discouraged and fly from the way of salvation. The beginning of the Way must be narrow. <sup>49</sup>But as we advance in the way of life and faith, we shall run the path of God’s commandments with expanded hearts and the inexpressible delight of love. <sup>50</sup>Never departing from His guidance and persevering in His teaching in the monastery until death, we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ, and may be found worthy also to share with Him in His kingdom.

*[Here begins the text of the Rule: It is called a rule because it regulates the lives of those who obey it.]*

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Kinds of Monks**

It is well known that there are four kinds of monks. <sup>2</sup>The first kind is that of Cenobites, that is, the monastics, who live under a rule and an Abbot.

<sup>3</sup>The second kind is that of Anchorites, or Hermits. They have come through the test of living in a monastery and passed beyond the first fervor of their conversion, <sup>4</sup>but taught by long monastic practice and the help of many brethren, have already learned to fight against the devil. <sup>5</sup>And going forth from the rank of their brethren, well trained for single combat in the desert, they are able, with the help of God, to cope single-handedly without the help of others, against the vices of the flesh and evil thoughts.

<sup>6</sup>But a third and most vile class of monks is that of Sarabaites, who are untried by any rule under the hand of a master, as gold is tried in the fire (*cf* Prov 27:21); but, soft as lead, <sup>7</sup>they are still loyal to the world by their works, and clearly lie to God by their tonsure. <sup>8</sup>Living in two's or three's, or even singly, without a shepherd, enclosed, not in the Lord's sheepfold, but in their own, the gratification of their selfish desires is their law; <sup>9</sup>because what they choose to do they call holy, but what they dislike they hold to be unlawful.

<sup>10</sup>But the fourth class of monks is that called Gyrovagues, who wander their whole life long from one place to another, staying three or four days at a time in different monasteries as guests. <sup>11</sup>Always roving and never settled, they indulge their passions and the cravings of their appetite, and are in every way worse than the Sarabaites.

<sup>12</sup>It is better to keep talk of all these silent rather than to speak of their most wretched life.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, passing these over, let us go on with the help of the Lord to lay down a rule for that most valiant kind of monks, the Cenobites.

## Chapter 2

### The Qualities of the Abbot

The Abbot who is worthy to be over a monastery, ought always to be mindful of what he is called, and make his works conform to his name of Superior. <sup>2</sup>For he is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, since he is called by a title of Christ, <sup>3</sup>according to the saying of the Apostle: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba (Father)" (*Rom* 8:15). <sup>4</sup>Therefore, the Abbot should never teach, prescribe, or command anything contrary to the instruction of the Lord. <sup>5</sup>His commands and teaching should be instilled like a leaven of divine justice into the minds of his disciples. <sup>6</sup>Let the Abbot always bear in mind that he must give an account in the dread judgment of God of both his own teaching and of the obedience of his disciples. <sup>7</sup>And let the Abbot know that whatever lack of profit the master of the house shall find in the sheep, will be laid to the blame of the shepherd. <sup>8</sup>On the other hand he will be blameless, if he gave all a shepherd's care to his restless and unruly flock, and took all pains to correct their corrupt manners, <sup>9</sup>so that their shepherd, acquitted at the Lord's judgment seat, may say to the Lord with the Prophet: "I have not hid Thy justice within my heart. I have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation" (*Ps* 39[40]:11). "But they have despised and rebelled against me" (*Is* 1:2; *Ezek* 20:27). <sup>10</sup>Then, at length, eternal death will be the crushing doom of the rebellious sheep under his charge.

<sup>11</sup>When, therefore, anyone receives the name of Abbot he should govern his disciples by a twofold teaching; <sup>12</sup>namely, he should show them all that is good and holy by his example more than by his words; explaining the commandments of God to receptive disciples by words, but showing the divine precepts to the dull and stubborn by his works. <sup>13</sup>And whatever he teaches his disciples as being contrary to the law of God must not be done, let him avoid doing those things, that "lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (*1 Cor* 9:27), <sup>14</sup>and he himself committing sin, God one day say to him: "What right have you to recite my statutes, or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you." (*Ps* 49[50]:16-17). <sup>15</sup>And also this: "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (*Mt* 7:3).

<sup>16</sup>Let the abbot make no distinction of persons in the monastery. <sup>17</sup>Let him not love one more than another, unless it be one whom he finds more exemplary in good works and obedience. <sup>18</sup>Let not a free-born man be given higher place to one born a slave, unless there be some other reasonable cause. <sup>19</sup>But if for a just reason the Abbot deems it proper to make such a distinction, he may do so in regard to the rank of anyone whomsoever; otherwise let everyone keep his own place; <sup>20</sup>for "whether bond or free, we

are all one in Christ” (cf Gal 3:28; Eph 6:8), and we all bear an equal burden of servitude under one Lord, “for God shows no partiality among persons” (Rom 2:11). <sup>21</sup>We are distinguished with the abbot in this respect alone, if we are found to excel others in good works and in humility. <sup>22</sup>Therefore, let the abbot show equal charity for all, and impose a uniform discipline for all according to merit.

<sup>23</sup>In his teaching the Abbot should always observe that principle of the Apostle in which he says: “convince, rebuke, and exhort” (2 Tm 4:2), <sup>24</sup>that is, mingling gentleness with severity, as the occasion may call for; let him show the severity of the master and the loving affection of a father. <sup>25</sup>He must sternly rebuke the undisciplined and restless; but he must exhort the obedient, meek, and patient to advance in virtue. But we charge him to rebuke and punish the negligent and haughty. <sup>26</sup>Let him not shut his eyes to the sins of evil-doers; but on their first appearance let him do his utmost to cut them out by the root at once, mindful of the fate of Eli, the priest of Shiloh (cf 1 Samuel 2:11-4:18). <sup>27</sup>The well-disposed and those of good understanding, let him correct at the first and second admonition with words alone; <sup>28</sup>but let him chastise the wicked and the hard of heart, and the proud and disobedient at the very first offense with stripes or other bodily punishments, knowing that it is written: “The fool is not corrected with words” (Prov 29:19). <sup>29</sup>And again: “Strike your son with the rod, and you will deliver his soul from death” (Prov 23:14).

<sup>30</sup>The Abbot ought always to remember what he is and what he is called, and to know that to whom much has been entrusted, from him much will be required. <sup>31</sup>Let him understand what a difficult and arduous task he undertakes in directing souls and accommodating himself to a variety of characters—speaking gently to one, to another by reproof, and to still another by entreaties, to each as is appropriate to their understanding. <sup>32</sup>Let him so adjust and adapt himself to each one that he not only suffer no loss in his flock, but may rejoice in the increase of a worthy fold. <sup>33</sup>Above all, the Abbot must not neglect or undervalue the welfare of the souls entrusted to him, having too great a concern about fleeting, earthly, perishable things. <sup>34</sup>Rather, let him always keep in mind that he has undertaken the care of souls for whom he must give an account. <sup>35</sup>And that he may not complain of the want of earthly means, let him remember what is written: “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well” (Mt 6:33). And again: “Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing” (Ps 33[34]:10).

<sup>37</sup>The abbot must know that anyone who undertakes the care of souls must prepare himself to give an account for them. <sup>38</sup>Whatever the number of brothers he has in his care, let him be sure that on judgment day he will, without doubt, have to give an account to the Lord for all these souls, in addition to that of his own. <sup>39</sup>And thus, while he is fearful of the Shepherd’s future examination about the sheep entrusted to him, and is watchful of his account for others, he is concerned also on his own account; <sup>40</sup>and while by his warnings he has administered correction to others, he amends his own failings.

## Chapter 3

### Summoning the Brothers for Counsel

Whenever weighty matters are to be transacted in the monastery, let the Abbot call together the whole community, and make known the matter which is to be considered. <sup>2</sup>Having heard the brother’s views, let him consider the matter himself and do what he thinks best. <sup>3</sup>It is for this reason, however, we said that all should be called for counsel, because the Lord often reveals to the youngest member what is best. <sup>4</sup>The brothers, however, should give their advice with humble submission, and let them not presume stubbornly to defend their own views, <sup>5</sup>for the decision is rather the Abbot’s to make, so that in what he considers best all obey him. <sup>6</sup>But just as it is proper for the disciples to obey their master, so also it is becoming for the master to settle all things with prudence and justice.

<sup>7</sup>Therefore, let all follow the Rule as their guide in everything, and let no one rashly depart from it. <sup>8</sup>Let no one in the monastery follow the desires of his own heart, <sup>9</sup>and let no one dare to dispute insolently with his Abbot, either inside or outside the monastery. <sup>10</sup>If any one dare to do so, let him be placed under the correction of the Rule. <sup>11</sup>Moreover, the Abbot himself must do everything in the fear of the Lord and out of reverence for the Rule, knowing that, beyond a doubt, he will have to give an account to God, the most just Judge, for all his rulings.

<sup>12</sup>If, however, matters of less importance, having to do with the welfare of the monastery, are under consideration, let the Abbot use the counsel of the seniors only, <sup>13</sup>as it is written: "Do all things with counsel, and you shall not need to repent when you are done" (Sir 32:24).

## Chapter 4

### The Tools for Good Works

First you must love the Lord God with your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole strength...<sup>2</sup>and your neighbor as yourself (cf Mt 22:37-39; Mk 12:30-31; Lk 10:27). <sup>3</sup>Then, you are not to kill... <sup>4</sup>not to commit adultery... <sup>5</sup>not to steal... <sup>6</sup>not to covet (cf Rom 13:9). <sup>7</sup>You are not to bear false "witness (cf Mt 19:18; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20). <sup>8</sup>You are to honor all men (cf 1 Pt 2:17). <sup>9</sup>And what you would not have done to yourself, do not do to another (cf Tob 4:16; Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31).

<sup>10</sup>Deny yourself in order to follow Christ (cf Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23). <sup>11</sup>Discipline your body (cf 1 Cor 9:27). <sup>12</sup>Do not to seek after pleasures, <sup>13</sup>but love fasting. <sup>14</sup>You are to relieve the poor. <sup>15</sup>Clothe the naked... <sup>16</sup>visit the sick (cf Mt 25:36). <sup>17</sup>and bury the dead. <sup>18</sup>Help those in trouble, <sup>19</sup>and console the sorrowing.

<sup>20</sup>Your way of acting should be different from worldly ways. <sup>21</sup>The love of Christ must be preferred to all else. <sup>22</sup>Do not give way to anger. <sup>23</sup>Do not foster a desire for revenge. <sup>24</sup>Do not entertain deceit in your heart. <sup>25</sup>Do not make a false greeting of peace. <sup>26</sup>Do not turn away someone in need of love. <sup>27</sup>Do not swear to any oath, lest it prove false. <sup>28</sup>Speak the truth with heart and tongue. <sup>29</sup>Do not return evil for evil (cf 1 Thes 5:15; 1 Pt 3:9). <sup>30</sup>Do no injury to another, but bear patiently the injury done to you. <sup>31</sup>Love your enemies (cf Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27). <sup>32</sup>Do not curse them that curse you, but rather bless them. <sup>33</sup>Bear persecution for justice sake (cf Mt 5:10).

<sup>34</sup>Do not be proud... <sup>35</sup>Do not be given to wine (cf Ti 1:7; 1 Tm 3:3). <sup>36</sup>Do not eat to excess, <sup>37</sup>or be given to much sleep. <sup>38</sup>Do not be slothful (cf Rom 12:11). <sup>39</sup>Do not grumble. <sup>40</sup>Do not speak ill of another. <sup>41</sup>Put your trust in God alone. <sup>42</sup>If you see what is good in yourself, give the credit to God. <sup>43</sup>But be sure that any evil in yourself is your own and charge it to yourself.

<sup>44</sup>Fear the day of judgment. <sup>45</sup>Be in dread of hell. <sup>46</sup>Desire eternal life with all spiritual longing. <sup>47</sup>Have an expectation of death before your eyes daily. <sup>48</sup>Keep a constant watch over the actions of our life <sup>49</sup>certain that God sees us everywhere. <sup>50</sup>Dash at once against Christ the evil thoughts which rise in your heart, and disclose them to your spiritual father. <sup>51</sup>Guard your tongue against bad and wicked speech. <sup>52</sup>Practice moderation in speaking. <sup>53</sup>Do not speak useless words and such as provoke laughter. <sup>54</sup>Do not love much or boisterous laughter.

<sup>55</sup>Listen willingly to holy reading. <sup>56</sup>Apply yourself often to prayer. <sup>57</sup>Confess your past sins to God daily in prayer with sighs and tears, <sup>58</sup>and to amend them for the future. <sup>59</sup>Do not fulfill the desires of the flesh (cf Gal 5:16). <sup>60</sup>Hate the urgings of your will. <sup>61</sup>Obey the commands of the Abbot in all things, even though he himself (which Heaven forbid) act otherwise, mindful of that precept of the Lord: "observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do" (Mt 23:3).



<sup>62</sup>Do not desire to be called holy before you are; but be holy first, that you may be truly so called. <sup>63</sup>Fulfill daily the commandments of God. <sup>64</sup>Treasure chastity. <sup>65</sup>Hate no one, <sup>66</sup>and do not be jealous. <sup>67</sup>Do nothing to entertain envy. <sup>68</sup>Do not love quarreling. <sup>69</sup>Do not be prideful. <sup>70</sup>Honor the aged. <sup>71</sup>Love the young. <sup>72</sup>Pray for your enemies in the love of Christ. <sup>73</sup>Make peace with an adversary before the setting of the sun. <sup>74</sup>And never despair of God's mercy.

<sup>75</sup>Behold, these are the instruments of the spiritual art, <sup>76</sup>which, if they have been applied without ceasing day and night and approved on judgment day, will merit for us from the Lord that reward which He has promised: <sup>77</sup>"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor 2:9). <sup>78</sup>But the workshop in which we perform all these works with diligence is the enclosure of the monastery, and stability in the community.

## Chapter 5

### Obedience

The first degree of humility is obedience without delay. <sup>2</sup>This comes to those who hold nothing dearer than Christ. <sup>3</sup>Because of the holy service which they have promised, or of the fear of hell, or the glory of life everlasting, <sup>4</sup>as soon as the Superior has commanded anything they permit no delay in the execution of that work, as if the matter had been commanded by God Himself. <sup>5</sup>The Lord says of these men: "At the hearing of the ear he has obeyed Me" (Ps 17[18]:45). <sup>6</sup>And again He says to the teachers: "He who hears you hears Me." (Lk 10:16). <sup>7</sup>Such people, therefore, instantly quit their own work and abandon their own will, <sup>8</sup>and lay down whatever they have in hand, and leaving unfinished what they were doing, follow with the ready step of obedience the voice of authority. <sup>9</sup>And in the same moment, both the master's command and the disciple's finished work are, in the fear of God, speedily finished together.

<sup>10</sup>The desire of advancing to eternal life urges them on. <sup>11</sup>They, therefore, are eager for the narrow way of which the Lord says: "Narrow is the way which leads to life" (Mt 7:14), <sup>12</sup>so that, they no longer live according to their own desires and pleasures but walk according to the judgment and will of another. They choose to live in monasteries, and desire an Abbot to be over them. <sup>13</sup>These men truly live up to the maxim of the Lord in which He says: "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me" (Jn 6:38).

<sup>14</sup>This obedience, however, will be acceptable to God and agreeable to men only if what is commanded is done without hesitation, delay, lukewarmness, grumbling or complaint. <sup>15</sup>For the obedience which is rendered to Superiors is rendered to God. For He Himself said: "He who hears you hears Me." (Lk 10:16). <sup>16</sup>Further, obedience must be rendered gladly by the disciples, "for the Lord loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor 9:7). <sup>17</sup>If the disciple obeys with an ill will and grumbles, not only with lips but also in his heart, <sup>18</sup>even though he fulfills the command, yet it will not be acceptable to God, who regards the heart of the grumbler. <sup>19</sup>And he will have no reward for such an action; rather he will incur the penalty for grumblers, unless he makes satisfactory amendment.

## Chapter 6

### Restraint of Speech

*Let us do what the Prophet says: “I said, I will take heed of my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I have set a guard over my mouth, I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence even from good things” (Ps 38[39]:2-3). <sup>2</sup>Here the prophet indicates that there are times we ought to refrain even from useful speech for the sake of silence. How much more ought we to abstain from evil words on account of the punishment due to sin. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, because of the importance of silence, let permission to speak be seldom given even to the mature disciples, no matter how good and holy and edifying their discourse, <sup>4</sup>for it is written: “In much talk you shall not escape sin” (Prov 10:19). <sup>5</sup>And elsewhere: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Prov 18:21). <sup>6</sup>For speaking and teaching are the master’s responsibility; the disciple is to be silent and listen.*

*<sup>7</sup>If, therefore, anything must be asked of the Superior, let it be asked with all humility and respectful submission. <sup>8</sup>But coarse jests, and idle words, or speech provoking laughter we condemn everywhere; and we do not permit the disciple to engage in speech of that kind.*

## Chapter 7

### Humility

*Brothers, the Holy Scripture calls to us saying: “For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk 14:11; 18:14). <sup>2</sup>In saying this, therefore, it shows us that every exaltation is a kind of pride. <sup>3</sup>The Prophet declares that he guards himself against this, saying: “O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me” (Ps 130[131]:1). <sup>4</sup>What then? “I have calmed and quieted my soul; as a child that is weaned is towards his mother, so shall You reward my soul” (Ps 130[131]:2).*

*<sup>5</sup>Hence, brothers, if we wish to reach the greatest height of humility, and speedily to arrive at that heavenly exaltation to which ascent is made in the present life by humility, <sup>6</sup>then, by our actions, we must erect the ladder which appeared to Jacob in his dream, by means of which angels were shown to him ascending and descending (cf Gen 28:12). <sup>7</sup>Without a doubt, we understand this ascending and descending to be nothing else but that we descend by pride and ascend by humility. <sup>8</sup>The erected ladder, however, is our life in the present world, which, if the heart is humble, is by the Lord lifted up to heaven. <sup>9</sup>For we say that our body and our soul are the two sides of this ladder; and into these sides the divine calling has inserted various steps of humility and discipline which we must mount.*

*<sup>10</sup>The first step of humility, then, is that a man always have the fear of God before his eyes (cf Ps 35[36]:1-2), shunning all forgetfulness <sup>11</sup>and that he be ever mindful of all that God has commanded, that he always consider in his mind how those who despise God will burn in hell for their sins, and that life everlasting is prepared for those who fear God. <sup>12</sup>And while he guards himself evermore against sin and vices of thought, word, deed, and self-will, let him also be quick to cut off the desires of the flesh. <sup>13</sup>Let a man consider that God always sees him from Heaven, that the eye of God observes his works everywhere, and that the angels report them to Him every hour.*

*<sup>14</sup>The Prophet tells us this when he shows that God is ever present in our thoughts, saying: “The searcher of hearts and minds is God” (Ps 7:10). <sup>15</sup>And again: “The Lord knows the thoughts of men” (Ps 93[94]:11). <sup>16</sup>And he says: “You have understood my thoughts afar off” (Ps 138[139]:3). <sup>17</sup>And: “The thoughts of man shall give praise to You” (Ps 75[76]:11). <sup>18</sup>Therefore, in order that he may always be on his guard against evil thoughts, let the humble brother always say in his heart: “Then I shall be spotless before Him, if I shall keep myself from iniquity” (Ps 17[18]:24).*

<sup>19</sup>We are thus forbidden to do our own will, since the Scripture tells us: “Turn away from your evil will” (Sir 18:30). <sup>20</sup>And, too, we ask God in prayer that His will may be done in us (cf Mt 6:10). <sup>21</sup>We are rightly taught not to do our own will when we guard against what the Scripture says: “There are ways that seem right to men, that in the end plunge them into the depths of hell” (Prov 16:25). <sup>22</sup>And also we are filled with fear at what is said of the negligent: “They are corrupted and become abominable in their desires” (Ps 13[14]:1).

<sup>23</sup>But as regards desires of the flesh, let us believe that God is ever present to us, since the Prophet says to the Lord: “All my desires are known to you” (Ps 37[38]:10). <sup>24</sup>We must, therefore, guard against evil desires, because death is stationed near the entrance of pleasure. <sup>25</sup>For this reason the Scripture commands us: “Do not pursue your lusts” (Sir 18:30).

<sup>26</sup>If, therefore, the eyes of the Lord observe the good and the bad (cf Prov 15:3) <sup>27</sup>and “the Lord always looks down from heaven on the children of men, to see whether there be anyone that understands and seeks God” (cf Ps 13[14]:2); <sup>28</sup>and if our actions are reported to the Lord day and night by the angels who are appointed to watch over us daily, <sup>29</sup>then we must ever be on our guard, brothers, as the Prophet says in the psalm, that God may at no time see us “gone aside to evil and become unprofitable” (Ps 13[14]:3), <sup>30</sup>and having spared us in the present time, because He is kind and waits for us to change for the better, says to us in the future: “These things you have done and I was silent” (Ps 49[50]:21).

<sup>31</sup>The second step of humility is, when a man loves not his own will, nor is pleased to fulfill his own desires <sup>32</sup>but by his deeds imitates that word of the Lord which says: “I came not to do My own will but the will of Him Who sent Me” (Jn 6:38). <sup>33</sup>It is likewise said: “Self-will has its punishment, but constraint wins the crown.”

<sup>34</sup>The third step of humility is, that for the love of God a man submits to his Superior in all obedience, imitating the Lord, of whom the Apostle says: “He became obedient unto death” (Phil 2:8).

<sup>35</sup>The fourth step in humility is that in this same obedience, though things may be hard and contrary and even injuries have been inflicted, [the monk] accepts them with patience <sup>36</sup>and with a quiet conscience endures it without growing weary nor giving in, for as the Scripture says: “Anyone who perseveres to the end shall be saved” (Mt 10:22). <sup>37</sup>And again: “Let your heart take courage, and wait for the Lord” (Ps 26[27]:14). <sup>38</sup>And showing that a faithful man ought even to bear every disagreeable thing for the Lord, it says in the person of the suffering: “For Your sake we suffer death all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter” (Rom 8:36; Ps 43[44]:22). <sup>39</sup>And secure in the hope of the divine reward, they go on joyfully, saying: “But in all these things we overcome because of Him Who loved us” (Rom 8:37). <sup>40</sup>And likewise in another place the Scripture says: “You, O God, have proved us; You have tried us by fire as silver is tried; You have brought us into a net, You have laid afflictions on our back” (Ps 65[66]:10-11). <sup>41</sup>And to show us that we ought to be under a Superior, it continues, saying: “You have set men over our heads” (Ps 65[66]:12). <sup>42</sup>And fulfilling the command of the Lord by patience also in adversities and injuries, “when struck on the one cheek, they turn also the other; when deprived of their coat they give their cloak also; and when forced to go one mile they go two” (cf Mt 5:39-41); <sup>43</sup>with the Apostle Paul they bear with false brothers and “bless those who curse them” (2 Cor 11:26; 1 Cor 4:12).

<sup>44</sup>The fifth step of humility is that a man does not hide from his Abbot any evil thoughts which rise in his heart or any evils committed by him in secret, but humbly confesses them. <sup>45</sup>Concerning this, the Scripture exhorts us, saying: “Reveal your way to the Lord and trust in Him” (Ps 36[37]:5). <sup>46</sup>And it says further: “Confess to the Lord, for He is good; His mercy endures forever” (Ps 105[106]:1; Ps 117[118]:1).

<sup>47</sup>And the Prophet also says: “I have acknowledged my sin to You and my faults I have not concealed.

<sup>48</sup>I said: I will confess my faults to the Lord; then You have forgiven the wickedness of my heart” (Ps 31[32]:5).

<sup>49</sup>*The sixth step of humility is, when a monk is content with the lowest and worst of everything, and in whatever tasks assigned to him he holds himself as a poor and worthless workman, <sup>50</sup>saying with the Prophet: “I am brought to nothing and ignorant; I have become as a beast before You; yet I am always with You” (Ps 72[73]:22-23).*

<sup>51</sup>*The seventh step of humility is, when not only with his tongue does a man declare, but also in his inmost soul believes, that he is the lowest and most worthless of men, <sup>52</sup>humbling himself and saying with the Prophet: “But I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people” (Ps 21[22]:7). <sup>53</sup>“I have been exalted, then humbled and confounded” (Ps 87[88]:16). <sup>54</sup>And also: “It is good for me that You have humbled me, that I may learn Your commandments” (Ps 118[119]:71,73).*

<sup>55</sup>*The eighth step of humility is, when a monk does only what is sanctioned by the common rule of the monastery and the example of his elders.*

<sup>56</sup>*The ninth step of humility is, when a monk restrains his tongue from speaking, and keeping silence, does not speak until he is asked a question; <sup>57</sup>for the Scripture says that “in a multitude of words you shall not avoid sin” (Prov 10:19); <sup>58</sup>and that “a man full of talk is not established in the earth” (Ps 139[140]:12).*

<sup>59</sup>*The tenth step of humility is, when a monk is not quickly given to laughter, for it is written: “Only the fool raises his voice in laughter” (Sir 21:23).*

<sup>60</sup>*The eleventh step of humility is, that, when a monk speaks, he speak gently and without laughter, humbly and seriously, with few and sensible words, without raising his voice, <sup>61</sup>as it is written: “The wise man is known by his few words.”*

<sup>62</sup>*The twelfth step of humility is, when a monk is not only humble of heart, but always lets it appear also in his bearing so that it becomes evident. <sup>63</sup>At the Work of God, in the garden, on a journey, in the field, or wherever he may be, sitting, walking, or standing, let him always have his head bowed, his eyes fixed on the ground, <sup>64</sup>ever holding himself guilty of his sins, thinking that he is already standing before the fearful judgment seat of God, <sup>65</sup>and always saying to himself in his heart what the publican in the Gospel said, with his eyes fixed on the ground: “Lord, I am a sinner and not worthy to lift up my eyes to heaven” (Lk 18:13); <sup>66</sup>and again with the Prophet: “I am bowed down and humbled in every way” (Ps 37[38]:7-9; Ps 118[119]:107).*

<sup>67</sup>*Having, therefore, ascended all these steps of humility, the monk will presently arrive at that love of God, which being perfect, casts out fear (1 Jn 4:18). <sup>68</sup>Through this love, all things which he once performed not without fear, he will now begin to keep without any effort, as it were, naturally by force of habit, <sup>69</sup>no longer from the fear of hell, but for the love of Christ, from the very habit of good and the pleasure in virtue. <sup>70</sup>May the Lord be pleased to manifest all this by His Holy Spirit in His laborer now cleansed from vice and sin.*

## **Chapter 8**

### **The Divine Office at Night**

*The brothers will rise during the winter season, that is, from the first day of November until Easter, making due allowance for circumstances, at the eighth hour of the night; <sup>2</sup>so that, having slept until a little after midnight, they may rise refreshed. <sup>3</sup>The time, however, which remains after Vigils will be used for study by those of the brothers who still have some parts of the psalms and the lessons to learn. <sup>4</sup>But from Easter to the first of November mentioned above, let the hour for celebrating Vigils be arranged so that a very short interval be provided the brothers that they may take care of the necessities of nature. Then Lauds, which is to be said at daybreak, may follow immediately.*

## Chapter 9

### The Number of Psalms at the Night Office

*During the winter season, Vigils begins with the verse: O Lord open my lips; and my mouth shall declare Your praise (Ps 50[51]:17). This is to be said three times. <sup>2</sup>After this Psalm 3 and the Gloria are to be added, <sup>3</sup>and Psalm 94 [95] with its antiphon is to be said or chanted. <sup>4</sup>Then let an Ambrosian hymn follow, and after that six psalms with antiphons. <sup>5</sup>When these and the versicle have been said, let the Abbot give the blessing. All being seated on the benches, let three lessons be read by the brothers from the book on the lectern, and between each let a responsory be said or sung. <sup>6</sup>Let two of the responsories be said without the Gloria, but after the third lesson let him who is chanting say the Gloria. <sup>7</sup>When the cantor begins to sing, let all rise at once from their seats in honor and reverence of the Blessed Trinity. <sup>8</sup>Besides the inspired books of the Old and the New Testaments to be read at Vigils, also the expositions of the Scriptures which have been made by reputable orthodox and Catholic Fathers should be included. <sup>9</sup>After these three lessons with their responsories, let six other psalms follow, together with a sung Alleluia. <sup>10</sup>After these let the lessons from the Apostle follow, to be said by heart, then the versicle and the litany, that is, Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy). <sup>11</sup>And the service of Vigils is thus completed.*

## Chapter 10

### The Night Office in Summer

*From Easter until the first of November let the whole number of psalms, as explained above, be said. <sup>2</sup>However, because of the shortness of the nights, no lessons are read from the book, but instead of these three lessons let one from the Old Testament be said from memory. Let a short responsory follow this. <sup>3</sup>And let all the rest be performed as was said, namely, that never fewer than twelve psalms be said at Vigils, in addition to Psalms 3 and 94 [95].*

## Chapter 11

### The Celebration of the Night Office on Sundays

*For Vigils on Sunday the monks should rise earlier. <sup>2</sup>At this office let the following order be observed: after six psalms and the versicle have been sung, and all have been properly seated on the benches in their order, let four lessons with their responsories be read from the book. <sup>3</sup>In the fourth responsory only, let the Gloria be said by the chanter, and as soon as he begins to sing let all rise with reverence.*

*<sup>4</sup>After these lessons let six other psalms with antiphons and the versicle follow in order as before, <sup>5</sup>and four more lessons with their responsories as above. <sup>6</sup>After these let there be said three canticles from the Prophets, selected by the Abbot, and chanted with Alleluia. <sup>7</sup>After the versicle and the Abbot's blessing, let four other lessons from the New Testament be read in the order as above. <sup>8</sup>But after the fourth responsory let the Abbot begin the hymn Te Deum laudamus (O God, we praise you). <sup>9</sup>When this has been sung, let the Abbot read the lesson from the Gospel, all standing with reverence and awe. <sup>10</sup>When the Gospel concludes let all answer Amen, and immediately the Abbot will follow up with the hymn Te decet laus (To You be praise). After a final blessing, Lauds will begin.*

*<sup>11</sup>Let this order of Vigils be observed on Sunday the same way in summer as well as in winter, <sup>12</sup>unless (God forbid) the monks should rise too late. If that were to happen, part of the lessons or the responsories would have to be shortened. <sup>13</sup>Let every precaution be taken that this does not occur. If it should happen, let him through whose neglect it came about make due satisfaction for it to God in the oratory.*

## Chapter 12

### Reciting Lauds

*At Lauds on Sunday, let Psalm 66 [67] be said first, without an antiphon. <sup>2</sup>After that Psalm 50 [51] is said with Alleluia. <sup>3</sup>After this let Psalms 117 and 62 [118 & 63] be said; <sup>4</sup>then the blessing and the praises (Psalms 148-150), one lesson from the Apocalypse, said by heart, a responsory, an Ambrosian hymn, the versicle and the canticle from the Gospel, the litany, and it is finished.*

## Chapter 13

### Lauds on Ordinary Days

*On weekdays let Lauds be celebrated in the following manner: <sup>2</sup>Let Psalm 66 [67] be said without an antiphon, drawing it out a little as on Sunday, so that all may be present for Psalm 50 [51], which is to be said with an antiphon. <sup>3</sup>After this let two other psalms be said according to custom: <sup>4</sup>on Monday, Psalms 5 and 35 [36]; <sup>5</sup>Tuesday Psalms 42 and 56 [43 & 57]; <sup>6</sup>Wednesday Psalms 63 and 64 [64 & 65]; <sup>7</sup>Thursday Psalms 87 and 89 [88 & 90]; <sup>8</sup>Friday Psalms 75 and 91 [76 & 92]; and on Saturday Psalm 142 [143] and the canticle from Deuteronomy, which should be divided into two sections with Gloria after each. <sup>10</sup>On the other days, however, let a canticle from the Prophets, each for its proper day, be said as the Roman Church designates. <sup>11</sup>After these let the psalms of praise follow (Psalms 148-150); then one lesson from the Apostle, to be said from memory, the responsory, the Ambrosian hymn, the verse, the canticle from the Gospel, the litany, and it is finished.*

*The offices of Lauds and Vespers must never be recited without the Lord's prayer being said at the end by the Superior for all to hear, because thorns of conflicts that are likely to arise. <sup>13</sup>Thus the petition all offer in the prayer in which is said, "Forgive us as we forgive" may cleanse themselves of this kind of evil. <sup>14</sup>At the other offices, let only the last part of that prayer be said aloud, that all may answer, "But deliver us from evil" (Mt. 6:13).*

## Chapter 14

### Vigils on Saints' Days

*On the feasts of the saints and on all solemn festivals, Vigils is to be performed as it would be done on Sunday, <sup>2</sup>except that the psalms, the antiphons, and the lessons proper for that day be said. The number of psalms above mentioned must be maintained.*

## Chapter 15

### The Times for Saying Alleluia

*From the holy feast of Easter until Pentecost "Alleluia" is to always be said both with the psalms and responsories. <sup>2</sup>From Pentecost until the beginning of Lent it is only said during Vigils with the last six psalms. <sup>3</sup>However, on all Sundays outside of Lent, all of the canticles and services of Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None are said with Alleluia. At Vespers, however, the antiphon is used. <sup>4</sup>Alleluia is never said with the responsories except from Easter to Pentecost.*

## Chapter 16

### The Divine Office During the Day

*As the Prophet says: “Seven times a day I have given praise to You” (Ps 118[119]:164). <sup>2</sup>This sacred sevenfold number will be fulfilled by us if we perform the duties of our service at the time of Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline; <sup>3</sup>for it was of these hours during the day that he said: “Seven times a day I have given praise to You” (Ps 118[119]:164). <sup>4</sup>For the same Prophet says concerning Vigils: “At midnight I arose to give praise to You” (Ps 118[119]:62). <sup>5</sup>Therefore, let us offer praise to our Creator “for His righteous ordinances” at these times: Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline; and “let us rise at night to praise Him” (cf Ps 118[119]:164, 62).*

## Chapter 17

### The Number of Psalms to be Sung

*We have already arranged the order of the psalmody for Vigils and Lauds. Now, let us arrange the other Hours. <sup>2</sup>At Prime three psalms are to be said, each followed by the Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father...). <sup>3</sup>The hymn for this Hour is sung after the opening verse “O God, come to my assistance...” (Ps 69[70]:2), before the psalms are begun. <sup>4</sup>Then, after the completion of three psalms, one lesson is read, a verse, the Kyrie eleison, the collects and dismissal.*

*<sup>5</sup>At the third, the sixth, and the ninth Hours, the prayer will be said in the same order; that is, the opening verse, the hymn proper to each Hour, three psalms, a lesson with versicle, the Kyrie eleison, the collects and dismissal. <sup>6</sup>If the community is large, let these Hours be sung with antiphons; but if small, let them be said without a refrain.*

*<sup>7</sup>The office of Vespers should be limited to four psalms with antiphons. <sup>8</sup>After these psalms a lesson is to be recited, a responsory, an Ambrosian hymn, a versicle, the canticle from the Gospel (Magnificat), the litany, the Lord’s Prayer, the collects and dismissal.*

*<sup>9</sup>Compline is limited to three psalms, which are to be said without an antiphon. <sup>10</sup>After these the hymn is sung for this Hour, one lesson, the versicle, Kyrie eleison, collects, the blessing, and dismissal.*

## Chapter 18

### The Order of Psalmody

*Each of the hours begins with the verse: “O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me” and the Gloria Patri (Glory be to the Father..) and the appropriate hymn for each hour. <sup>2</sup>Then, at Prime on Sunday four sections Psalm 118[119] are said. <sup>3</sup>And at the other hours, that is at Terce, Sext and None, three sections of this psalm are said. <sup>4</sup>At Prime on Monday three other psalms are said: Psalms 1, 2 and 6. <sup>5</sup>And at Prime each day thereafter until Sunday, three psalms are said in consecutive order up to Psalm 19 [20]. Psalms 9 [9 & 10] and 17 [18] are each divided into two sections. <sup>6</sup>In this way, Sunday Vigils can always begin with Psalm 20 [21].*

*<sup>7</sup>On Monday at Terce, Sext and None, the nine remaining sections of Psalm 118 [119] are recited, three parts at each of those hours. <sup>8</sup>Psalm 118 [119] is thus completed in two days, Sunday and Monday. <sup>9</sup>On Tuesday three psalms are said at each of the hours of Terce, Sext and None. These are the nine Psalms, 119 - 127 [120 - 128]. <sup>10</sup>These psalms be repeated daily at these hours until Sunday. Also the arrangement of hymns, lessons and versicles are observed the same way on all of these days. <sup>11</sup>In this way, Psalm 118 [119] will always begin anew on Sunday.*

<sup>12</sup>Four psalms will be sung at Vespers <sup>13</sup>beginning with Psalm 109 [110] and ending with Psalm 147, <sup>14</sup>omitting those psalms appointed to other hours, namely, Psalms 117 [118] through 127 [128], Psalm 133 [134] and Psalm 142 [143]. <sup>15</sup>All the rest are to be said at Vespers. <sup>16</sup>And because this leaves three psalms short, the longer ones are to be divided: Psalms 138, 143, 144 [139, 144, 145]. <sup>17</sup>But because Psalm 116 [117] is short, it may be joined with Psalm 115 [116]. <sup>18</sup>This is the order of the Vesper psalms; the rest of the service, the lessons, responsories, hymns, versicles and canticles, are to be recited as was explained above.

<sup>19</sup>At Compline, the same psalms are to be repeated daily: Psalms 4, 90 [91], 133 [134].

<sup>20</sup>The remaining psalms, those not accounted for in this arrangement for the day hours, shall be distributed equally over the seven nights of the week at Vigils. <sup>21</sup>The longer psalms are to be divided so that twelve psalms (or portions thereof) are said each night.

<sup>22</sup>We advise that if anyone finds this distribution of the psalms displeasing, he may arrange them however he judges better, <sup>23</sup>provided that the full complement of all 150 psalms is said every week, and that the series begins afresh each Sunday at Vigils. <sup>24</sup>For monks show great sloth in their devotional service if they recite less than the full Psalter in the course of a week with the customary canticles, <sup>25</sup>for we read, that our holy Fathers promptly fulfilled in one day what we lukewarm monks can achieve in a whole week.

## Chapter 19

### The Discipline of Psalmody

We believe that God is present everywhere and that “the eyes of the Lord behold the good and the bad in every place” (cf Prov 15:3). <sup>2</sup>And it is important for us to firmly believe this, especially when we take part in the Work of God, the Divine Office. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, always remember what the Prophet says, “Serve the Lord with fear” (Ps 2:11); <sup>4</sup>and again, “Sing praise wisely” (Ps 46[47]:8); <sup>5</sup>and, “I will sing praise to You in the sight of the angels” (Ps 137[138]:1). <sup>6</sup>Therefore, let us consider how we ought to behave in the sight of God and His angels, <sup>7</sup>and so, let us stand to sing the psalms so that our minds may be in harmony with our voices.

## Chapter 20

### Reverence in Prayer

If when we wish to seek any favor from men of influence we presume not to do so except with humility and reverence, <sup>2</sup>how much more must supplication be made with all humility and purity of devotion to the Lord God of all? <sup>3</sup>And let us bear in mind that it is not in our many words that we are heard by God, but in purity of heart and tears of penitence. <sup>4</sup>And so our prayer should be pure and short, unless perhaps it be prolonged as a result of inspiration of divine grace. <sup>5</sup>In any case, however, prayer in community should always be brief, and at the signal from the superior all should rise as one.



## **Chapter 21**

### **The Deans of the Monastery**

*If the community is large, let some brothers of good repute and holy life be chosen from among them and be appointed Deans; <sup>2</sup>and let them take care of their deaneries in everything according to the commandments of God and the directions of their Abbot. <sup>3</sup>The Deans should be chosen by the Abbot that he may safely trust them to share his burden. <sup>4</sup>Let them not be chosen for their rank, but for the merit of their life and their wisdom and knowledge. <sup>5</sup>If any of them become puffed up with pride, and be found deserving of censure, and after having been corrected once, twice, and even a third time, refuse to amend, let him be removed from office, <sup>6</sup>and be replaced by one who is worthy. <sup>7</sup>We make the same regulation with reference to the Prior.*

## **Chapter 22**

### **The Sleeping Arrangements**

*The brothers are to sleep each in a separate bed. <sup>2</sup>They should receive the bedding appropriate to monastic life, according to the direction of their Abbot. <sup>3</sup>If it can be done, let all sleep in one large room; but if there are too many, let them sleep in tens or twenties under the care of the seniors who have oversight of them. <sup>4</sup>Let a light be kept burning constantly in the cell until morning.*

*<sup>5</sup>They should sleep clothed and girded with cinctures or cords, that they may be always ready to rise without delay, but they should remove their knives, to avoid being wounded while asleep. <sup>6</sup>And when the sign is given, they must be ready to rise without delay, and let them hasten to arrive at the Work of God before the others, yet with all dignity and decorum. <sup>7</sup>The younger brothers should not have their beds beside each other, but intermingled with the older ones. <sup>8</sup>And rising for the Work of God, let them gently encourage each other to avoid the excuses of the drowsy.*

## **Chapter 23**

### **Excommunication**

*If a brother is found stubborn or disobedient or proud or murmuring, or opposed to anything in the Holy Rule, and defies the orders of his Superiors, <sup>2</sup>let him be admonished by his Superiors twice privately, according to the command of our Lord (cf Mt 18:15-16). <sup>3</sup>If he does not amend, he must be rebuked publicly before all. <sup>4</sup>But if he does not reform even then, and he understands what the penalty is, let him be excommunicated. <sup>5</sup>However, if he lacks understanding, let him undergo corporal punishment.*

## **Chapter 24**

### **Degrees of Excommunication**

*The degree of excommunication or punishment ought to be in due proportion to the gravity of the offense, <sup>2</sup>and it is up to the judgment of the Abbot to determine that. <sup>3</sup>If, however, a brother is found guilty of a lesser fault, he must not be allowed to eat at the common table. <sup>4</sup>The following shall be the practice respecting one who is excluded from the common table: in the oratory he will not intone a psalm or an antiphon nor read a lesson until he has made satisfaction; <sup>5</sup>and he will take his meals alone, after the brothers have eaten. <sup>6</sup>For instance, if the brothers eat their meal at the sixth hour, that brother will take his at the ninth, and if the brothers take theirs at the ninth, he will take his in the evening, <sup>7</sup>until having made due satisfaction he obtains pardon.*

## Chapter 25

### Serious Faults

*A brother who is found guilty of a most serious fault shall be excluded from both the table and the oratory. <sup>2</sup>No other brother may associate or speak with him. <sup>3</sup>Let him work alone at the tasks assigned to him, persevering in penitential sorrow, mindful of the terrible sentence of the Apostle who said, that <sup>4</sup>“such a man is delivered over for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:5). <sup>5</sup>Let him take his food alone in such quantity and at such a time as the Abbot shall deem fit; <sup>6</sup>and let him not be blessed by anyone passing by, nor should the food that is given him be blessed.*

## Chapter 26

### Unauthorized Association with the Excommunicated

*If a brother presumes to associate with an excommunicated brother in any way, or to speak with him, or to send him a message, without the command of the Abbot, <sup>2</sup>let him incur the same penalty of excommunication.*

## Chapter 27

### The Abbots Concern for the Excommunicated

*The Abbot must show all care and concern towards offending brothers because “it is not the healthy that need a physician, but the sick” (Mt 9:12). <sup>2</sup>Therefore, like a wise physician he ought to use every opportunity to send senpectae, that is, discreet elderly brothers, <sup>3</sup>who may support the wavering brother in secret, and encourage him to make humble satisfaction and console him “lest he be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow” (2 Cor 2:7). <sup>4</sup>Rather, as the Apostle also says, “confirm your charity towards him” (2 Cor 2:8); and let prayer be said for him by all.*

*<sup>5</sup>The Abbot must make the utmost effort, and strive with all wisdom and zeal, in order that none of the flock entrusted to him perish. <sup>6</sup>For the Abbot must know that he has taken upon himself the care of infirm souls, not a tyranny over the healthy. <sup>7</sup>And let him fear the threat of the Prophet in which the Lord said: “What you saw to be fat, you took to yourselves, and what was diseased you threw away” (Ezek 34:3-4). <sup>8</sup>He is to follow the loving example of the Good Shepherd, who, leaving the ninety-nine sheep on the mountains, went to seek the one that had gone astray, <sup>9</sup>on whose weakness He had such pity, that He was pleased to lay it on His sacred shoulders and carry it back to the fold (cf Lk 15:5).*

## Chapter 28

### Those Who Refuse to Amend

*If a brother has often been corrected and has even been excommunicated for a fault and does not amend, let him receive a more severe correction, that is, let him receive corporal punishment. <sup>2</sup>But if even then he does not reform, or should become puffed up with pride, or even defends his actions, which God forbid, the Abbot must act like a wise physician. <sup>3</sup>After he has applied soothing lotions, ointments of admonitions, the medicine of the Holy Scriptures, and finally the harsh rod of excommunication and the blows of the lash, <sup>4</sup>and if he sees that even then his pains are of no avail, let him apply an even better remedy: his own prayer and that of the brothers, <sup>5</sup>so that the Lord who is all-powerful may work a cure in that brother. <sup>6</sup>But if he is not healed even in this way, then finally the Abbot must dismiss him from the community, as the Apostle says: “Put away the evil one from among you” (1 Cor 5:13); <sup>7</sup>and again: “If the faithless one departs, let him depart” (1 Cor 7:15); <sup>8</sup>lest one diseased sheep infect the whole flock.*

## Chapter 29

### Readmission of Brothers Who Have Left

*If a brother, who through his own evil will, leaves the monastery, but later desires to return, let him first promise full amendment for the fault of leaving; <sup>2</sup>and let him be received back, but in the last place as a test of his humility. <sup>3</sup>If he should leave again, or even a third time, he should be allowed to return under the same conditions. But after this, he must understand that every prospect of return will be denied him.*

## Chapter 30

### The Manner of Reproving the Youth

*Every age and understanding should have its proper discipline. <sup>2</sup>Whenever, therefore, boys or immature youths or those who cannot understand how grave a penalty excommunication is, <sup>3</sup>are guilty of a serious fault, they should be subjected to severe fasting or be disciplined with corporal punishment, that they may be corrected.*

## Chapter 31

### The Cellarer

*There should be chosen from the brotherhood a Cellarer of the monastery. He is to be a wise man, of settled habits, temperate and frugal, not conceited, irritable, resentful, sluggish, or wasteful. <sup>2</sup>He must fear God, and be as a father to the whole brotherhood. <sup>3</sup>He is to have the charge of everything, <sup>4</sup>but do nothing without the command of the Abbot. <sup>5</sup>He is to do what he has been ordered to do, <sup>6</sup>and not annoy the brothers.*

*<sup>7</sup>If a brother should make an unreasonable request for anything, let him not reject the brother with a cold refusal, but politely and humbly refuse the one making the improper request. <sup>8</sup>Let him be watchful of his own soul, always mindful of the saying of the Apostle: "For those who have ministered well, shall gain a good standing for themselves" (1 Tm 3:13). <sup>9</sup>Let him provide for the sick, the children, the guests, and the poor, with all care, knowing that, without doubt, he will have to give an account of all these things on judgment day. <sup>10</sup>He must regard all the vessels and goods of the monastery as if they were sacred vessels of the altar, <sup>11</sup>and let him neglect nothing. <sup>12</sup>He is not to give way to avarice, nor be wasteful and a squanderer of the goods of the monastery; but let him do all things in due measure and according to the bidding of his Abbot.*

*<sup>13</sup>Above all things, let him be humble. If he does not have the things requested, let him answer with a kind word, <sup>14</sup>for it is written: "A good word is better than the best gift" (Sir 18:17). <sup>15</sup>He should take care of everything that the Abbot has entrusted to him, and not presume to do what the Abbot has forbidden. <sup>16</sup>Let him give the brothers their apportioned allowance of food without pride or delay, so that they may not be scandalized, for he must remember what the Scripture says the person deserves who scandalizes one of these little ones: "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18:6).*

*<sup>17</sup>If the community is large, let assistants be given him, that, with their help, he may calmly fulfill the office entrusted to him. <sup>18</sup>Let the things that are to be given be distributed, and the things requested be asked for at the proper times, <sup>19</sup>so that nobody may be disturbed or grieved in the house of God.*

## Chapter 32

### The Tools and Goods of the Monastery

*The Abbot should appoint brothers in whose lives and character he has confidence to oversee the property of the monastery's tools, clothing, and general goods. <sup>2</sup>Let him assign to them, as he sees proper, all the articles which must be collected and cared for. <sup>3</sup>The Abbot will keep a list of these articles, so that, when the brothers in turn succeed each other in these assigned tasks, he may know what is given and what is returned. <sup>4</sup>If anyone, however, fails to handle the goods of the monastery carefully let him be reprimanded, <sup>5</sup>and if he does not amend let him come under the discipline of the Rule.*

## Chapter 33

### Private Ownership

*The vice of personal ownership must by all means be removed by the very root from the monastery. <sup>2</sup>No one must presume to give or receive anything without permission of the Abbot; <sup>3</sup>nor to retain anything whatever as his own, neither a book, nor a writing tablet, nor a pen, nor anything else whatsoever; <sup>4</sup>since monks are not allowed to own even their own bodies or their wills. <sup>5</sup>For everything that they need, they must look to the Father of the monastery, and are not to be allowed to have anything which the Abbot did not give or permit him to have. <sup>6</sup>All things are to be held in common, as it is written, so that no one call or take to himself anything as his own (cf Acts 4:32). <sup>7</sup>But if anyone should be found to indulge in this most evil vice, he should be warned a first and second time. <sup>8</sup>If he does not amend, let him be subjected to punishment.*

## Chapter 34

### The Distribution of Goods According to Need

*It is written, "Distribution was made to each as any had need" (Acts 4:35). <sup>2</sup>We do not say by this that there should be favoritism (God forbid), but there should be regard for weaknesses. <sup>3</sup>Whoever needs less should thank God and not be distressed, <sup>4</sup>but whoever has need of more should humble himself because of his weakness, not becoming elated for the indulgence shown him. <sup>5</sup>Thus all the members will be at peace. <sup>6</sup>Above all, let there be no evil murmuring in word or behavior for any reason whatever. <sup>7</sup>If anyone be found grumbling, let him be placed under very severe discipline.*

## Chapter 35

### The Kitchen Servers

*The brothers should serve each other so that no one will be excused from the work in the kitchen, unless he is sick or involved in more important work, <sup>2</sup>because such service increases the reward and promotes love. <sup>3</sup>Let help be given to the weak, so that they may serve without distress, <sup>4</sup>but let all receive help according to the size of the community and the circumstances of the place. <sup>5</sup>If the community is large, let the Cellarer be excused from kitchen service, and, as we have said, anyone engaged in more urgent work. <sup>6</sup>Let the rest serve each other in love.*

*<sup>7</sup>Whoever is completing their weekly service will do the cleaning on Saturday. <sup>8</sup>Let him wash the towels which the brothers used to wipe their hands and feet. <sup>9</sup>Both the one completing his service and the one about to begin are to wash the feet of all. <sup>10</sup>Let the one completing his service return the utensils of the kitchen to the Cellarer clean and whole, <sup>11</sup>and the Cellarer shall give those to the one beginning his week. In this way he may know what he distributes and what he receives back. <sup>12</sup>An hour before mealtime let each of the weekly servers receive a cup of drink and a piece of bread above the prescribed*

portion, <sup>13</sup>so that they may serve their brethren at the mealtime without murmuring or undue strain. <sup>14</sup>On solemn feast days, however, let them abstain until after Mass.

<sup>15</sup>As soon as Lauds on Sunday is ended, let the weekly servers who are to begin their service and those completing theirs, kneel in the oratory before all, asking their prayers. <sup>16</sup>Let the server completing his weekly service say the following verse: “Blessed are You, Lord God, for you have helped me and comforted me” (Dan 3:52; Ps 85[86]:17). <sup>17</sup>After having said this three times the one departing receives the blessing. Then the one beginning his service follows and says: “O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me” (Ps 69[70]:2). <sup>18</sup>And let this also be repeated three times by all. And when he has received the blessing, let him begin his weekly service.

## **Chapter 36**

### **The Sick Brothers**

Before and above all things, care must be taken of the sick, that they may be truly served as Christ, <sup>2</sup>because He said, “I was sick and you visited Me” (Mt 25:36), <sup>3</sup>and “As you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me” (Mt 25:40). <sup>4</sup>But let the sick themselves also consider that they are served for the honor of God, and let them not grieve their brothers who serve them by unreasonable demands. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, sick brothers must be patiently borne with, because serving them leads to a more bountiful reward. <sup>6</sup>The Abbot’s greatest concern, therefore, must be that they suffer no neglect.

<sup>7</sup>A separate room should be made for the sick brothers, and a God-fearing, diligent, and careful attendant should be appointed to serve them. <sup>8</sup>The use of the bath must be offered to the sick as often as it is needed, but the healthy, and especially the young, should not be given permission often. <sup>9</sup>Also, meat may be given to the sick who are very weak to speed their recovery, however, when they have recovered, they should all abstain from meat in the usual manner.

<sup>10</sup>The Abbot must exercise the utmost care that the Cellarer and the attendants who serve the sick do not neglect them, for whatever shortcomings his disciples may have are his responsibility.

## **Chapter 37**

### **The Elderly and Children**

Although human nature is of itself drawn to feel compassion toward both old and young, still, the decree of the Rule ought to make provision also for them. <sup>2</sup>Since their natural weakness must always be taken into account, the strictness of the Rule should not be imposed upon them regarding food, <sup>3</sup>but let them be treated gently regarding when they need to eat before regular hours.

## **Chapter 38**

### **The Reader of the Week**

Reading must always accompany the meals of the brothers. The reader should not be anyone who may by chance take up the book, but one who will read for the whole week, beginning that office on Sunday. <sup>2</sup>After Mass and Communion let him ask all to pray for him that God may shield him from the spirit of pride. <sup>3</sup>And let the following verse be said three times by all in the oratory, with him beginning it: “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim Your praise” (Ps 50[51]:15). <sup>4</sup>And when he has received the blessing, let him begin his reading for the week.

<sup>5</sup>Let there be profound silence during the reading that no whispering or speaking be heard, except that of the reader alone. <sup>6</sup>But let the brothers serve each other, so that what is needed for eating and drinking may be provided without asking. <sup>7</sup>If, however, anything should be needed, it should be requested by means of a sign rather than a sound. <sup>8</sup>And no one should presume to ask any questions either about the book or anything else, in order that “no opportunity be given [to the devil]” (Eph 4:27; 1 Tm 5:14). <sup>9</sup>The Superior, however, may wish to say a few words for edification.

<sup>10</sup>The brother who is reader for the week may take a little bread and wine before he begins to read, on account of Holy Communion and because the fast may be too long for him. <sup>11</sup>Afterward, however, let him take his meal in the kitchen with the weekly servers and the waiters. <sup>12</sup>The brothers will not read or sing in order of their rank, but only those who edify their hearers.

## Chapter 39

### The Proper Amount of Food

Making allowance for the weakness of individual persons, we believe that for the daily meal, both at the sixth and the ninth hour, two kinds of cooked food are sufficient at all meals, <sup>2</sup>so that one who cannot eat of one, may make his meal of the other. <sup>3</sup>Two kinds of cooked food, therefore, should be sufficient for all the brothers. And if fruit or fresh vegetables are available, a third dish also may be added. <sup>4</sup>A pound of bread should be sufficient for the day, whether for only one meal or for both dinner and supper. <sup>5</sup>If two meals, let a third part of the pound be set aside by the Cellarer and be given at supper.

<sup>6</sup>If, however, the work has been especially hard, the Abbot has the power to decide to add something to the meal, if he thinks it is appropriate, <sup>7</sup>barring above all things every excess, so that no monk suffer indigestion. <sup>8</sup>For nothing is so contrary to the life of a Christian as overindulgence, <sup>9</sup>as our Lord says: “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with overindulgence...” (Lk 21:34). <sup>10</sup>Do not serve the same quantity of food to young children but less than to older ones, since we should be frugal in all things. <sup>11</sup>Let everyone except the very weak and the sick abstain altogether from eating the flesh of four-footed animals.

## Chapter 40

### The Proper Amount of Drink

“Each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another” (1 Cor 7:7). <sup>2</sup>It is with some hesitation, then, that we determine the measure of food and drink for others. <sup>3</sup>However, making allowance for the weakness those who are sick, we think a half bottle of wine a day is sufficient for each one. <sup>4</sup>But to those whom God grants the strength of abstinence, they shall know that they will earn their reward.

<sup>5</sup>If the circumstances of the local conditions, or the work, or the summer’s heat should require more, let the judgment of the Superior determine who needs a greater amount. He must, above all things, see to it that excess or drunkenness do not creep in. <sup>6</sup>Although we read that wine is not at all proper for monks, yet, because monks in our times cannot be persuaded of this, let us agree to this, at least, that we do not drink to excess, but moderately, <sup>7</sup>for “wine makes even wise men go astray” (Sir 19:2).

<sup>8</sup>But where the poverty of the local circumstances will not permit the measure indicated above, but much less, or none at all, let those who live there bless God and grumble not at all. <sup>9</sup>Above all things, we charge that they live without grumbling.

## Chapter 41

### The Times of the Meals

*From holy Easter until Pentecost, the brothers dine at the sixth hour and take supper in the evening. <sup>2</sup>From Pentecost through the whole summer, if the monks have no work in the fields and the excess of the heat does not interfere, they shall fast on Wednesday and Friday until the ninth hour.*

*<sup>3</sup>On the other days they dine at the sixth hour. <sup>4</sup>If they have work in the fields or the heat of the summer is great, the Abbot may decide they should maintain the sixth hour for dinner, <sup>5</sup>and so let him manage and adapt everything that souls may be saved, and that what the brothers do, they may do without having a reasonable cause for grumbling.*

*<sup>6</sup>From the ides of September until the beginning of Lent, they always dine at the ninth hour. <sup>7</sup>During Lent, however, until Easter, let them dine in the evening. <sup>8</sup>But let Vespers be said at a time that they will not need lamp-light during their meal, and that everything can be finished while it is still day. <sup>9</sup>But let the mealtimes always be arranged so that, whether dinner or supper, everything is done by daylight.*

## Chapter 42

### Silence After Compline

*Monks should always diligently pursue silence, especially during the hours of the night. <sup>2</sup>Therefore, every day, whether a fast day or for ordinary days, <sup>3</sup>as soon as they have risen from their evening meal, let all sit together in one place, and let one read the Conferences or the Lives of the Fathers, or something else that will edify the hearers, <sup>4</sup>but not, however, the Heptateuch or the Books of the Kings, because it would not be wholesome for weak minds to hear this part of the Scripture at that hour; they should, however, be read at other times.*

*<sup>5</sup>On a fast day, between Vespers and the reading of the Conferences, there should be a short interval. <sup>6</sup>Then four or five pages shall be read, or as much as the hour will permit. <sup>7</sup>This will allow all to assemble in one place during the time of the reading, including those who were engaged in work assigned to them. <sup>8</sup>All, therefore, having assembled in one place, shall say Compline; and after going out from Compline, there is then to be no more permission for anyone to say anything. <sup>9</sup>If, however, anyone is found to break this rule, let him undergo heavy punishment, unless the needs of guests should arise, or the Abbot should perhaps give a command to anyone. <sup>10</sup>But even this is to be done with the utmost seriousness and moderation.*

## Chapter 43

### Tardiness at the Work of God or at Mealtime

*As soon as the signal for the time of the divine office is heard, let everyone, leaving whatever he has in his hands, go with all speed, <sup>2</sup>yet with gravity and without creating cause for levity. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, let nothing be preferred to the Work of God.*

*<sup>4</sup>If at Vigils anyone comes after the Gloria of the 94th psalm, which we wish to be said slowly and deliberately, let him not stand in his place in the choir. <sup>5</sup>He must stand in the last place, or in a place set apart by the Abbot for such careless ones, that he may be seen by the Abbot and by all, <sup>6</sup>until he makes satisfaction by public penance, when the Work of God is ended. <sup>7</sup>The reason why we think they should stand in the last place, or apart from the rest, is that they may be seen by all and this will shame them into amending. <sup>8</sup>For if they stayed outside the oratory, there might be one who would go back to sleep, or worse yet, would sit outside and indulge in vain gossip, thereby giving a “occasion to the devil” (Eph 4:27; 1 Tm 5:14). <sup>9</sup>Rather, they should go inside so that they may not lose everything, and may amend for the future.*

<sup>10</sup>At the day hours the same rule applies to those who arrive for the Work of God after the opening verse and the Gloria of the first psalm. He is to stand in the last place. <sup>11</sup>Let him not attempt to join the choir of those praying the psalms until he has made satisfaction, unless the Abbot pardons him and grants exception. <sup>12</sup>Even if granted exception he is still bound to atone for the fault afterwards.

<sup>13</sup>If anyone does not come to the table before the verse, so that all may say the verse and pray together, and sit down at table together, <sup>14</sup>if he failed to be timely through his own fault and negligence, let him be corrected twice. <sup>15</sup>If he still does not amend, let him not be permitted to eat at the common table, <sup>16</sup>but let him eat alone, separated from the company of all. His portion of wine should be taken from him, until he has made satisfaction and shown amendment. <sup>17</sup>Anyone who is not present for the verse which is said after the meal should receive the same treatment.

<sup>18</sup>And no one is to presume to eat or drink before or after the appointed time. <sup>19</sup>But if anything should be offered to a brother by the Superior and he refuses to accept it, then afterwards desires what he first refused or anything else, he should receive nothing at all until he makes due satisfaction.

## **Chapter 44**

### **Satisfaction by the Excommunicated**

Whoever is excommunicated for serious faults from the oratory and the table, at the time when the Work of God is celebrated in the oratory, <sup>2</sup>he must prostrate himself in silence before the door at the feet of all who leave the oratory. <sup>3</sup>And let him do this until the Abbot judges that it is enough. <sup>4</sup>At the Abbot's bidding, he is to prostrate himself at the Abbot's feet, then at the feet of all, that they may pray for him. <sup>5</sup>If then the Abbot orders it, he may be received back into the choir in the place which the Abbot assigns. <sup>6</sup>Even so, he should not presume to intone a psalm or a lesson or anything else in the oratory, unless the Abbot again bids him to do so. <sup>7</sup>Then, at all the Hours, when the Work of God is ended, he must prostrate himself in the place he occupies. <sup>8</sup>He will continue to make satisfaction until the Abbot again bids him finally to cease from this penance.

<sup>9</sup>Those who are excommunicated for lesser faults from the table only are to make satisfaction in the oratory for as long as the Abbot commands, <sup>10</sup>and let them perform this until he gives his blessing and says, "It is enough."

## **Chapter 45**

### **Mistakes in the Oratory**

If anyone makes a mistake while reciting a psalm, a responsory, an antiphon, or while reading a lesson, and does not humble himself at that time before all by making satisfaction, let him receive a greater punishment, <sup>2</sup>because he would not correct by humility what he did amiss through negligence. <sup>3</sup>But let children be beaten for such a fault.

## **Chapter 46**

### **Faults Committed in Other Matters**

If someone commits a fault while at any work, in the kitchen, in the cellar, in serving, in the bakery, in the garden, at any art or work in any place whatever, <sup>2</sup>by breaking or losing something, or failing in any way whatever, <sup>3</sup>he must come at once before the Abbot and the community, and of his own accord confess his offense and make satisfaction. <sup>4</sup>If it becomes known through another, let him be subjected to a greater correction. <sup>5</sup>If, however, the cause of the offense is secret, let him disclose it to the Abbot alone, or to one of his spiritual Superiors, <sup>6</sup>who know how to heal their own wounds, and not expose or make public those of others.



## Chapter 47

### Announcing the Hours

*Let it be the Abbot's care to announce the time for the Work of God both by day and by night. He may either announce it himself or entrust this charge to a careful brother, so that everything may be done at the proper time.*

*<sup>2</sup>Only those who have been authorized may intone the psalms or the antiphons in their turn after the Abbot. <sup>3</sup>No one should presume to sing or read unless he is able to edify the hearers; <sup>4</sup>and let it be done with humility, seriously, and with reverence as the Abbot has ordered.*

## Chapter 48

### The Daily Manual Labor

*Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore the brothers ought to have certain times for manual labor as well as time for devout reading. <sup>2</sup>Hence, we believe that the time for each will be properly ordered by the following arrangement: <sup>3</sup>From Easter until the first of October, they spend their morning from the first until about the fourth hour doing the necessary work, <sup>4</sup>but from the fourth until the sixth hour they devote to reading. <sup>5</sup>After Sext and the noonday meal, let them rest in their beds in complete silence; or if anyone desires to read privately, let him do so but without disturbing others. <sup>6</sup>Let None be said somewhat earlier, about the middle of the eighth hour, and then until Vespers they are to return to the work that is necessary. <sup>7</sup>If, however, the local conditions or their own poverty should require that they do the work of gathering the harvest themselves, let them not be downcast, <sup>8</sup>for then they are true monks if they live by the work of their own hands, as did our forefathers and the Apostles. <sup>9</sup>However, on account of the faint-hearted let all things be done with moderation.*

*<sup>10</sup>From the first of October until the beginning of Lent, let them devote themselves to reading until the end of the second hour. <sup>11</sup>At that time Terce is said, and then let all work at their assigned tasks until the ninth hour. <sup>12</sup>When the first signal for the hour of None is given, each one is to leave their work and be ready when the second signal is given. <sup>13</sup>Then after the meal let them devote themselves to reading or to the psalms.*

*<sup>14</sup>During the Lenten season let them be free in the morning to read until the third hour, and until the tenth hour let them do the work which is assigned to them. <sup>15</sup>During these days of Lent each one is to receive a book from the library, and is to read it straight through. <sup>16</sup>These books are to be given out at the beginning of the Lenten season.*

*<sup>17</sup>Above all, one or two of the seniors should be appointed to go about the monastery during the time that the brothers devote to reading <sup>18</sup>and to see that no slothful brother be found who gives himself up to idleness or vain talk, and does not attend to his reading, and so is himself unprofitable, but disturbs others. <sup>19</sup>If such a one is found (which God forbid), he is to be punished once or twice if necessary, <sup>20</sup>and if he does not amend, he must come under the correction of the Rule in such a way that others may fear. <sup>21</sup>And further, brothers ought not associate at inappropriate times.*

*<sup>22</sup>On Sunday all are to devote themselves to reading, except those who are appointed to various functions. <sup>23</sup>But if anyone is so careless and slothful that he will not or cannot meditate or read, let some work be given him to do, that he may not be idle.*

*<sup>24</sup>Weak and sickly brothers should be given such work or craft that they will not remain idle, but without straining them or driving them away. <sup>25</sup>Their weakness must be taken into account by the Abbot.*

## **Chapter 49**

### **The Observance of Lent**

*The life of a monk ought always to be a Lenten observance. <sup>2</sup>However, since such virtue is that of few, we advise that during these days of Lent he guard his life with all purity <sup>3</sup>and to wash away during these holy days all the shortcomings of other times. <sup>4</sup>This will be done fittingly, if we restrain ourselves from all vices, and devote ourselves to prayers with tears, to reading, heartfelt penitence, and to abstinence. <sup>5</sup>During these days, therefore, we will add something to the usual amount of our service, private prayers, abstinence from food and drink, <sup>6</sup>so that each one offer to God “with the joy of the Holy Spirit” (1 Thes 1:6), of his own desire, something above his prescribed measure. <sup>7</sup>In other words, let each one deny himself some food, drink, sleep, needless speech, and jesting, and with the gladness of spiritual desire anticipate holy Easter.*

*<sup>8</sup>Each one, however, should make known to his Abbot what he intends to do, and let it be done with his approval and blessing. <sup>9</sup>Whatever is done without permission of the spiritual father will be reckoned as presumption and vainglory, and not to merit. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, let all be done with the approval of the Abbot.*

## **Chapter 50**

### **Brothers Traveling**

*The brothers who work too far away, and cannot come to the oratory at the appointed time—<sup>2</sup>and the Abbot has assured himself that such is the case—<sup>3</sup>should perform the Work of God where they are working, kneeling out of reverence for God. <sup>4</sup>In the same way let those who are sent on a journey not omit the appointed hours, but say the office by themselves as best they can, and not neglect to fulfill their obligation of divine service.*

## **Chapter 51**

### **Brothers on a Short Journey**

*A brother who is sent out on any business and is expected to return to the monastery the same day, may not presume to eat outside, even if he is urgently invited to do so, <sup>2</sup>unless, indeed, it is commanded him by his Abbot. <sup>3</sup>If he act otherwise, he will be excommunicated.*

## **Chapter 52**

### **The Oratory of the Monastery**

*The oratory needs to be what it is called, and let nothing else be done or stored there. <sup>2</sup>When the Work of God is finished, all should depart in complete silence, and with reverence for God, <sup>3</sup>so that a brother who may desire to pray alone is not prevented by another’s misconduct. <sup>4</sup>But if perhaps another desires to pray alone, he may simply enter and pray, not with a loud voice, but with tears and fervor of heart. <sup>5</sup>Therefore, the one who does not wish to say his prayers in this way, is not permitted to stay in the oratory after the Work of God is finished, as we said, that another may not be disturbed.*

## Chapter 53

### The Reception of Guests

*Let all guests who arrive be received as Christ, because He will say, “I was a stranger and you welcomed Me” (Mt 25:35). <sup>2</sup>And let appropriate honor be shown to all, “especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal 6:10) and to wayfarers.*

*<sup>3</sup>When a guest is announced, let him be met by the Superior and the brethren with every mark of love. <sup>4</sup>First they are to pray together, and let them be united in peace. <sup>5</sup>This kiss of peace, though, should not be given before a prayer has been said, because satan seeks to deceive. <sup>6</sup>In the greeting let all humility be shown to the guests, whether coming or going. <sup>7</sup>Let Christ be adored in them, with head bowed or the whole body prostrate on the ground, because He is also received in them.*

*<sup>8</sup>When the guests have been received, they should be invited to prayer; and after that the Superior, or whom he shall bid, will sit with them. <sup>9</sup>The divine law is to be read to the guest so that he may be edified, and after that every kindness should be shown to him. <sup>10</sup>The fast may be broken by the Superior in deference to the guest, unless it is a day of solemn fast, which cannot be broken. <sup>11</sup>The brothers, however, keep the customary fast. <sup>12</sup>The Abbot should pour water on the guest’s hands, <sup>13</sup>and both the Abbot and the whole community wash the feet of all the guests. <sup>14</sup>When they have been washed, the guests say this verse: “We have received Your mercy, O God, in the midst of Your temple” (Ps 47[48]:10).*

*<sup>15</sup>Great care must be taken, especially in the reception of the poor and travelers, because Christ is received more particularly in them; whereas our regard for the wealthy assures them of respect.*

*<sup>16</sup>The kitchen of the Abbot and the guests should be separate from the brothers’, so that the brothers might not be disturbed by the guests who arrive at uncertain times—and monasteries are never without guests. <sup>17</sup>Assign two brothers who are competent to work in the kitchen for a year. <sup>18</sup>Additional help may be given them as they need it, that they may serve without grumbling. And when they have not enough to do in the kitchen, let them go out again for work where it has been assigned to them. <sup>19</sup>This course should be followed, not only in this office, but in all the offices of the monastery, <sup>20</sup>that whenever any brother needs help, it be given to him, and that when he has nothing to do, he again does his assigned work. <sup>21</sup>Moreover, let the guest quarters be assigned to a God-fearing brother, <sup>22</sup>where there should be a sufficient number of beds prepared. <sup>23</sup>And the house of God should be managed by sensible men who will care for it wisely.*

*<sup>24</sup>On no account is anyone to associate or speak with guests, who is not ordered to do so; however if a brother meets or sees a guest, he is to greet them humbly, as we have said, and he is to ask for a blessing and to continue on explaining that he is not allowed to speak with a guest.*

## Chapter 54

### Letters and Gifts

*A monk is not allowed at any time to give or to receive letters, tokens, or gifts of any kind, either from parents or any other person, nor from each other, without the permission of the Abbot. <sup>2</sup>Even if anything is sent to him by his parents, let him not presume to accept it without making known to the Abbot that he has received it. <sup>3</sup>And if the Abbot allows it to be accepted, let it be in the Abbot’s discretion to give it to whom he pleases. <sup>4</sup>And let not the brother to whom it was sent, become sad, that “no opportunity be given to the devil” (Eph 4:27; 1 Tm 5:14). <sup>5</sup>Whoever shall presume to act otherwise must fall under the discipline of the Rule.*

## Chapter 55

### Clothing and Footwear

*Let clothing be given to the brothers according to the circumstances of the place and the nature of the climate in which they live, <sup>2</sup>because in cold regions more is needed, while in warm regions less. <sup>3</sup>This is left to the Abbot's discretion. <sup>4</sup>We believe, however, that for a temperate climate a cowl and a tunic for each monk are sufficient; <sup>5</sup>a woollen cowl is necessary for winter, and a thin or worn one for summer; <sup>6</sup>also a scapular for work, and sandals and shoes as covering for the feet. <sup>7</sup>Monks must not worry about the color or the texture of all these things, but use such as can be bought more cheaply. <sup>8</sup>The Abbot, however, should look to the size to insure that these garments are not too small, but fitted for those who are to wear them.*

*<sup>9</sup>Those who receive new clothes should always return the old ones, to be put away in the wardrobe for the poor. <sup>10</sup>For it is sufficient for a monk to have two tunics and two cowls, for wearing at night and for washing, <sup>11</sup>but any more than that is superfluous and must be taken away. <sup>12</sup>So, too, when they receive anything new, let them return sandals and whatever is old.*

*<sup>13</sup>Brothers who are sent on a journey should receive underclothing from the wardrobe, which, on their return, they will replace there, washed. <sup>14</sup>Their cowls and tunics should also be a little better than the ones they usually wear, which they received from the wardrobe when they set out on a journey, and give back when they return.*

*<sup>15</sup>For their bedding, a straw mattress, a blanket, a coverlet, and a pillow should be sufficient. <sup>16</sup>These beds must, be frequently examined by the Abbot, to prevent personal goods from being found. <sup>17</sup>And if anything should be found with anyone that he did not receive from the Abbot, let him fall under the severest discipline. <sup>18</sup>And that this vice of private ownership may be cut off by the root, let everything necessary be given by the Abbot: <sup>19</sup>that is, cowl, tunic, sandals, shoes, belt, knife, pen, needle, towel, and writing tablet; so that every excuse of want may be removed. <sup>20</sup>The Abbot should bear in mind the following sentence from the Acts of the Apostles: "And distribution was made to every man according to his need" (Acts 4:35). <sup>21</sup>In this way, then, the Abbot will have regard for the infirmities of the needy, not for the evil will of the envious. <sup>22</sup>Yet in all his decisions, let the Abbot bear in mind God's retribution.*

## Chapter 56

### The Abbot's Table

*The Abbot's table must always be with the guests and travelers. <sup>2</sup>Whenever there are no guests, it is in his discretion to invite any of the brothers he should choose. <sup>3</sup>Let him, however, insure that one or two of the seniors always remain with the brothers for the sake of discipline.*

## Chapter 57

### Artisans

*If there are skilled workmen in the monastery, let them work at their art in all humility, but only if the Abbot gives his permission. <sup>2</sup>If one of them should grow proud by reason of his art, such that he feels he is conferring a benefit on the monastery, <sup>3</sup>let him be removed from that work and not return to it, unless after he has humbled himself the Abbot again orders him to do so.*

*<sup>4</sup>If any of the work of the artists is to be sold, let them, through whose hands the transaction must pass, see to it, that they do not presume to practice any fraud on the monastery. <sup>5</sup>Let them always be mindful of Ananias and Sapphira, who suffered death in the body (cf Acts 5:1-11), <sup>6</sup>lest they and all who practice any fraud in things belonging to the monastery suffer in the soul. <sup>7</sup>As regards the prices of these things, let not the vice of avarice creep in, <sup>8</sup>but let it always be sold a little cheaper than it can be sold by secular dealers, <sup>9</sup>so that God May Be Glorified in All Things (1 Pt 4:11).*

## Chapter 58

### Receiving Brothers

*Do not grant easy admission to one who has newly come to monastic life, <sup>2</sup>but, as the Apostle says, “Test the spirits to see whether they are of God” (1 Jn 4:1). <sup>3</sup>If, therefore, the newcomer keeps on knocking, and after four or five days it is seen that he patiently bears the harsh treatment offered him and the difficulty of admission, and that he perseveres in his request, <sup>4</sup>then shall admission be granted to him, and let him live for a few days in the guest quarters. <sup>5</sup>But after that let him live in the novitiate, and there let him meditate, eat, and sleep.*

*<sup>6</sup>A senior should be appointed for him, who is qualified to win souls, who will observe him with great care <sup>7</sup>and see whether he really seeks God and whether he is eager for the Work of God, and for obedience and trials. <sup>8</sup>The novice should be shown all the hard and rugged things which lead us to God.*

*<sup>9</sup>If he promises to remain steadfast in stability, then after two months have passed, let this Rule be read to him straight through <sup>10</sup>and let it be said to him: This is the law under which you desire to serve. If you can keep it, enter in; if, however, you cannot, depart freely. <sup>11</sup>If he still stands firm, then let him be taken back to the novitiate, and let him be tried again in all patience. <sup>12</sup>And after six months have passed, let the Rule be read to him again, so that he may know what he is entering. <sup>13</sup>And if he still stands firm, let the same Rule be read to him again after four months. <sup>14</sup>After having weighed the matter with himself, if he promises to keep everything, and to do everything that is commanded him, then let him be received into the community, <sup>15</sup>knowing that he is now placed under the law of the Rule, and from that day forward it is no longer permitted to him to leave the monastery, <sup>16</sup>nor to shake his neck from under the yoke of the Rule, which after so long a deliberation he was at liberty to either refuse or to accept.*

*<sup>17</sup>Let him who is received promise in the oratory, in the presence of all, before God and His saints, stability, fidelity to moral life, and obedience, <sup>18</sup>in order that, if he should ever do otherwise, he may know that he will be condemned by God Whom he mocks. <sup>19</sup>He is to make a written statement of his promise in the name of the saints whose relics are there, and of the Abbot there present. <sup>20</sup>The novice is to write this document with his own hand, or if he does not know how to write, let another write it at his request, and let the novice make his mark, and with his own hand place it on the altar. <sup>21</sup>When he has placed it there, let the novice next begin the verse: “Uphold me according to thy promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope!” (Ps 118[119]:116). <sup>22</sup>Then all the brothers repeat this verse three times, adding the Gloria Patri. <sup>23</sup>Then the novice prostrates himself at the feet of each monk, asking that they pray for him; and from that day he is to be counted in the brotherhood.*

<sup>24</sup>If he has any possessions, he should first either give them to the poor, or formally donate them to the monastery, reserving nothing for himself <sup>25</sup>as indeed he should know that from that day onward he will no longer have power even over his own body. <sup>26</sup>Then, in the oratory, he is to be divested at once of the garments with which he is clothed, and be vested in the garb of the monastery. <sup>27</sup>But let the clothes of which he was divested be laid by in the wardrobe to be preserved, <sup>28</sup>so that, if he were to ever agree with the devil's suggestion and leave the monastery (which God forbid) he can be then stripped of his monastic habit and cast out. <sup>29</sup>But let him not receive the document of his profession which the Abbot took from the altar, but let it be preserved in the monastery.

## **Chapter 59**

### **Receiving Children of the Noble and Poor**

If a nobleman offers his son to God in the monastery, and the boy is of a young age, his parents should write a written promise which we have mentioned above; <sup>2</sup>then at the service of oblation they will wrap that document and the boy's hand in the altar cloth. That is the means to offer him. <sup>3</sup>As to their property, they are to bind themselves under oath in the same document that they will never give him anything themselves, nor through any other person, nor in any way whatever, nor give the boy anything or give him opportunity to own anything; <sup>4</sup>or else, if they refuse to do this and want to make an offering to the monastery as an alms for their own benefit, <sup>5</sup>let them make a formal donation to the monastery of whatever goods they wish to give, keeping to themselves the income of it, if they so desire. <sup>6</sup>And there ought to be no opportunity for the boy to expect anything and thus deceive him and ruin him. May God forbid this. But in the past we have learned by experience that this can happen.

<sup>7</sup>Let those who are poor act in like manner. <sup>8</sup>But as to those who have nothing at all, let them simply write the declaration, and with this oblation offer their son in the presence of witnesses.

## **Chapter 60**

### **The Admission of Priests**

If a priest asks to be received into the monastery, let consent not be granted too quickly. <sup>2</sup>However, if he urgently persists in his request, let him know that he must keep the whole discipline of the Rule, <sup>3</sup>and that nothing will be relaxed in his favor; that it may be as it is written: "Friend, why are you here?" (Mt 26:50). <sup>4</sup>It may be granted him, however, to stand next to the Abbot, and to give the blessing, or to celebrate Mass, but only if the Abbot orders him to do so. <sup>5</sup>But if the Abbot does not, let the priest not presume to do anything himself, knowing that he is under the discipline of the Rule, but rather give an example of humility to all. <sup>6</sup>But if there is a question of an appointment in the monastery, or any other matter, <sup>7</sup>let him be ranked by the time of his entry into the monastery, and not by the place granted him in consideration of the priesthood.

<sup>8</sup>But if a cleric, moved by the same desire, wishes to join the monastery, let him too have a middle place, provided he promises to keep the Rule and observe stability.

## **Chapter 61**

### **The Reception of Visiting Monks**

If a monk from far away arrives and desires to stay in the monastery as a guest, <sup>2</sup>and is satisfied with the customs he finds there, and does not trouble the monastery with unreasonable demands, <sup>3</sup>but is satisfied with what he finds, let him be received for as long as he desires. <sup>4</sup>Still, if he should reasonably, with humility and charity, criticize or point out anything, the Abbot should prudently consider whether the Lord may have sent him for that very purpose.

<sup>5</sup>If later, the visitor makes known his desire to declare his stability, he should not be denied, and especially since his life could be examined during his stay as a guest. <sup>6</sup>But if during the time that he was a guest he was found to be troublesome and disorderly, he must not be admitted to the monastic body <sup>7</sup>but instead, he should even be politely requested to leave, that others may not be infected by his evil life.

<sup>8</sup>But if [a visiting monk] has not been shown to be deserving of dismissal, he should not only be admitted, if he requests, <sup>9</sup>but he should even be urged to remain, that others may be taught by his example, <sup>10</sup>because we all serve the one Lord and do battle for the one King everywhere. <sup>11</sup>In addition, if the Abbot recognizes him as deserving, he may place him in a somewhat higher rank. <sup>12</sup>It is at the Abbot's discretion to place not only a priest or cleric, but also a monk, in a higher place than that of their entry, if he sees that he deserves it.

<sup>13</sup>But the Abbot must take care never to receive a monk in the community who is a member of another monastery without the consent of his Abbot or commendatory letters, <sup>14</sup>because it is written: "what you hate, do not do to any one" (Tb 4:15).

## Chapter 62

### The Priests of the Monastery

If the Abbot desires to have a priest or a deacon ordained, he should select from among his monks one who is worthy to discharge the priestly office. <sup>2</sup>But the one who has been ordained should be on his guard against arrogance and pride, <sup>3</sup>and he should not attempt to do anything but what is commanded him by the Abbot, knowing that he is now all the more subject to the discipline of the Rule. <sup>4</sup>Just because he is now a priest he should not forget the obedience and discipline of the Rule, but must advance more and more in godliness.

<sup>5</sup>Let him, however, always keep the place which he had when he entered the monastery, <sup>6</sup>except when he is engaged in sacred functions, unless the community chooses and the Abbot wishes to promote him in acknowledgment of the merit of his life. <sup>7</sup>He must know, however, that he must observe the Rule prescribed for the Deans and the Superiors; <sup>8</sup>and if he should do otherwise, let him be judged, not as a priest, but as a rebel. <sup>9</sup>If after frequent warnings he does not amend, let the bishop be notified. <sup>10</sup>But if even then he does not amend, and his guilt is clearly shown, he is to be removed from the monastery, <sup>11</sup>provided his obstinacy is such that he will neither submit nor obey the Rule.

## Chapter 63

### Order of Rank in the Monastery

Everyone shall keep their rank in order in the monastery according to the time of their entry and as the virtue of their life distinguishes it, or as the Abbot directs. <sup>2</sup>The Abbot is not to disorder the flock committed to him, nor by an arbitrary use of his power dispose of anything unjustly. <sup>3</sup>He must always bear in mind that he will have to give an account to God for all his judgments and works. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, let the brothers approach for the kiss of peace, for Communion, intone the psalms, and stand in choir in the order that the Abbot has established, or as already established among them. <sup>5</sup>And in no place whatever let age determine the order or be a disadvantage. <sup>6</sup>Remember Samuel and Daniel were mere boys when they judged their elders (cf 1 Sam. 3; Dan 13:44-62). <sup>7</sup>Except for the one whom, as we have said before, the Abbot has from higher motives advanced, or for certain reasons has lowered, all the rest shall take their place as they are received. <sup>8</sup>For example, let him who came into the monastery at the second hour of the day, know that he is younger than he who came at the first hour, whatever his age or dignity may be. <sup>9</sup>Children are to be kept under discipline at all times and by everyone.

<sup>10</sup>Therefore, let the younger one honor their elders, and the older love the younger. <sup>11</sup>In speaking to each other let no one be allowed to address another simply by his name; <sup>12</sup>rather let the older address the younger as brother, and let the younger call his elder, father, by which is implied the reverence due to a father. <sup>13</sup>But because the Abbot is believed to hold the place of Christ, let him be called Lord and Abbot, not for any claim on his part, but out of love and reverence for Christ. <sup>14</sup>Let him think of this and so show himself worthy of such an honor.

<sup>15</sup>Wherever the brothers meet, let the younger ask the blessing from the older, <sup>16</sup>and when the older passes by, let the younger rise and give him place to sit, and not presume to sit down with him unless his elder bids him to do so, <sup>17</sup>that it may be done as it is written: “outdo one another in showing honor” (Rom 12:10).

<sup>18</sup>Let children and boys take their places in the oratory and at table with all due discipline.

<sup>19</sup>Outdoors and wherever they may be, they should be supervised and controlled until they reach the age of understanding.

## Chapter 64

### The Election of an Abbot

In the election of an Abbot let this always be observed as a rule, that the one placed in this position be the one whom the whole community with one consent, in the fear of God, or by a small part of the community with sounder judgment, shall elect. <sup>2</sup>But let him who is to be elected be chosen for the merit of his life and the wisdom of his teaching, even if he is the last in community rank. <sup>3</sup>But even if the whole community should by mutual consent elect a man who agrees to connive at their evil ways (which God forbid) <sup>4</sup>and these irregularities come to the knowledge of the Bishop of the diocese to which the place belongs, or to neighboring Abbots, or Christian people in the region, <sup>5</sup>they must not permit the conspiracy of the wicked to succeed, but appoint a worthy steward over the house of God, <sup>6</sup>knowing that they shall receive a bountiful reward for this action, if they do it with a pure intention and godly zeal. If on the other hand, they neglect to do so, they may be sure it will be counted as sin.

<sup>7</sup>Once the Abbot has been elected, let him bear in mind how great a burden he himself has received, and to whom he must give an account of his stewardship (cf Lk 16:2); <sup>8</sup>and let him be convinced that it is better to serve than to rule. <sup>9</sup>He must, therefore, be versed in the divine law, so that he may have knowledge of when “to bring forth new things and old” (Mt 13:52). He must be chaste, sober, and merciful, <sup>10</sup>and always exalt “mercy above judgment” (Jas 2:13), so that he also may obtain mercy. <sup>11</sup>Let him hate vice, but love the brothers. <sup>12</sup>And even in his corrections, let him act with prudence and not go to extremes, lest, while he rubs to remove the rust he rubs too harshly and the vessel be broken. <sup>13</sup>Let him always keep his own frailty in mind, and remember that “the bruised reed must not be broken” (Is 42:3). <sup>14</sup>In this we are not saying that he should allow evils to take root, but that he cut them off with prudence and charity, as he shall see it is best for each one. <sup>15</sup>And let him aim to be loved rather than feared.

<sup>16</sup>Let him not be excitable, over-anxious, exacting, or headstrong; let him not be jealous or suspicious, because if he is, he will never have rest. <sup>17</sup>In all of his commands, whether they refer to things spiritual or temporal, let him be cautious and considerate. <sup>18</sup>He ought to be discerning and temperate in the tasks which he assigns, recalling the discretion of holy Jacob who said: “If I should cause my flocks to be overdriven, they would all die in one day” (Gen 33:13). <sup>19</sup>Keeping in view these and other dictates of discretion, the mother of virtues, he must so arrange everything that the strong may still have something to desire and the weak may not draw back.



<sup>20</sup>Above all, let him keep this Rule in every detail, <sup>21</sup>that when he has served well he may hear from the Lord what the good servant heard who gave his fellow-servants bread in due season: “Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions” (Mt 24:47).

## Chapter 65

### The Prior

Too often it happens indeed, that grave scandals arise in monasteries out of the appointment of the Prior. <sup>2</sup>There are some who are puffed up with the wicked spirit of pride and think of themselves as second Abbots. They set up a despotic rule, foster scandals, and excite quarrels in the community, <sup>3</sup>and especially in those places where the same Bishop or the same Abbots appoints both the Abbot and Prior. <sup>4</sup>It can easily be seen how foolish this is, because from the very beginning of his appointment, a basis for pride is furnished to him, <sup>5</sup>when his thoughts suggest to him that now he is exempt from the authority of the Abbot, <sup>6</sup>because “You have been appointed by those who appointed the Abbot.” <sup>7</sup>This can foster envy, discord, slander, quarrels, jealousy, and all forms of disorder. <sup>8</sup>If the Abbot and the Prior are at variance with each other, it must follow that their souls are endangered by this discord <sup>9</sup>and that those who are under them, as long as they take sides in the disputes, go to their ruin. <sup>10</sup>The responsibility for this evil rests on the heads of those who were the authors of such disorders.

<sup>11</sup>Therefore, for the preservation of peace and charity, it is best that the government of the monastery should rest with the Abbot; <sup>12</sup>and if it can be done, let the affairs of the monastery (as we have explained before) be attended to by deans, as the Abbot directs, <sup>13</sup>so that, no one may become proud, if the responsibility of the office is shared by many. <sup>14</sup>But if the local situation requires it, or the community reasonably and with humility make the request, and the Abbot shall deem it advisable, <sup>15</sup>then let the Abbot himself appoint as Prior whomever he should choose, with the advice of God-fearing brothers. <sup>16</sup>But let the Prior reverently do what his Abbot assigns him, doing nothing against the will or the direction of the Abbot; <sup>17</sup>for the higher he is placed above others, the more careful he should be to obey the precepts of the Rule.

<sup>18</sup>If the Prior is found disorderly, or blinded by conceit, or shows contempt for the Holy Rule, he must be admonished up to four times. <sup>19</sup>If he does not amend, he is to be punished under the regular discipline of the Rule. <sup>20</sup>But if he does not amend even then, let him be deposed from the office of prior and another who is worthy be appointed in his place. <sup>21</sup>But if even after that he is not a quiet and submissive brother, let him be expelled from the monastery. <sup>22</sup>Yet, let the Abbot reflect that he must give an account to God for all his judgments, lest the flames of envy or jealousy should sear his soul.

## Chapter 66

### The Porter

Place a wise old man at the door of the monastery, one who knows how to take a message and give an answer, and whose mature age prohibits him from straying about. <sup>2</sup>The porter should have a cell near the door, so that anyone who comes may always find one present from whom they may obtain an answer. <sup>3</sup>As soon as anyone knocks or a poor person calls out, he answers, “Thanks be to God,” or invokes a blessing, <sup>4</sup>then with gentleness from the fear of God he returns an answer speedily in the fervor of charity. <sup>5</sup>If the porter has need of assistance, let him have a younger brother.

<sup>6</sup>If it can be done, the monastery should be so constructed that all the necessities, such as water, the mill, the garden, are enclosed, and the various arts may be plied inside of the monastery, <sup>7</sup>so that there may be no need for the monks to go about outside, because it is not good for their souls.

<sup>8</sup>But we desire that this Rule be read quite often in the community, that none of the brethren may excuse himself of ignorance.

## Chapter 67

### Brothers Sent on a Journey

Brothers who are sent on a journey should ask the prayers of all, the community and the Abbot. <sup>2</sup>And after the last prayer at the Work of God, the community should always pray for the absent brothers. <sup>3</sup>On the day that the brothers return from the journey, let them lie prostrate on the floor of the oratory at all the Canonical Hours, when the Work of God is finished, <sup>4</sup>and ask the prayers of all on account of their failings, in case they may have seen some evil or heard frivolous speech.

<sup>5</sup>And let no one presume to relate to another what he has seen or heard outside of the monastery, because it is most hurtful. <sup>6</sup>But if anyone should presume to do so, let him undergo the penalty of the Rule. <sup>7</sup>In the same way anyone who presumes to go beyond the enclosure of the monastery, or anywhere else, or to do anything, however little, without the order of the Abbot must be punished.

## Chapter 68

### Assignment of Impossible Tasks

If any difficult or impossible tasks are assigned to a brother, let him receive the order given to him with all meekness and obedience. <sup>2</sup>If, however, he sees that the task is altogether beyond his strength, then he should patiently and reasonably explain the reasons for his inability to his Superior, <sup>3</sup>without pride, protest, or refusal to obey. <sup>4</sup>If, however, after his explanation the Superior still insists on his assignment, then the younger must accept that it is good for him, <sup>5</sup>and let him obey in love, relying on the help of God.

## Chapter 69

### Presumption of Defending Another

Care must be taken that on no occasion one monk try to defend another in the monastery, or to take his side in a dispute, <sup>2</sup>even if they are closely related by ties of blood. <sup>3</sup>In no way should the monks presume to do this, because such conduct may give rise to very grave conflict. <sup>4</sup>If anyone breaks this rule, let him be severely punished.

## Chapter 70

### Presumption of Striking Another

Let every occasion for presumption be avoided in the monastery. <sup>2</sup>We decree that no one may be permitted to excommunicate or to strike any of his brothers, unless the Abbot has given him the authority. <sup>3</sup>“But let those who transgress be taken to task in the presence of all, that the others may fear” (cf 1 Tm 5:20). <sup>4</sup>Children, up to the age of fifteen, however, should be carefully cared for by all, <sup>5</sup>provided that it be done within due limits and with discretion. <sup>6</sup>For if anyone should presume to chastise those of more advanced years, without the command of the Abbot, or should unreasonably treat the children, let him be subject to the discipline of the Rule; <sup>7</sup>because it is written: “what you would not have done to yourself, do not do to another” (Tobit 4:16).

## Chapter 71

### Mutual Obedience

*Obedience is a blessing to be shown by all, not only to the Abbot, but also to one another, <sup>2</sup>knowing that we shall go to God by this path of obedience. <sup>3</sup>Granted that the command of the Abbot and of the Superiors who are appointed by him take precedence over private commands, <sup>4</sup>in other circumstances let the younger brethren obey their elders with all charity and zeal. <sup>5</sup>But if anyone is found to be obstinate, let him be punished.*

*<sup>6</sup>And if a brother is punished in any way by the Abbot or by any of his Superiors for even a slight reason <sup>7</sup>or if he perceives that of any of his Superiors is angry or disturbed with him, <sup>8</sup>let him without delay cast himself down on the ground at the other's feet making satisfaction, until the agitation is quieted by a blessing. <sup>9</sup>If anyone refuses to do this, either let him undergo corporal punishment, or, if he is obstinate, let him be expelled from the monastery.*

## Chapter 72

### The Good Zeal of Monks

*Just as there is a harsh and evil zeal which separates us from God and leads to hell, <sup>2</sup>so there is a virtuous zeal which separates from vice and leads to God and life everlasting. <sup>3</sup>This is, therefore, the zeal which monks must pursue with most ardent love: <sup>4</sup>“that they should be the first to show honor to one another” (cf Rom 12:10), <sup>5</sup>that they bear, with the utmost patience, with one another's infirmities, whether of body or mind, and let them vie with one another in obedience. <sup>6</sup>Let no one follow what he thinks useful to himself, but rather to another. <sup>7</sup>Let them practice brotherly charity with a chaste love; <sup>9</sup>and to God, loving fear; <sup>10</sup>and to love their Abbot with sincere and humble affection. <sup>11</sup>Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, <sup>12</sup>and may He lead us all together to life everlasting.*

## Chapter 73

### This Rule is Only the Beginning

*Now, we have written this Rule that, observing it in monasteries, we may show that we have acquired at least some moral righteousness, the beginning of the monastic life. <sup>2</sup>For the one who is hastening on to the perfection of the religious life, there are the teachings of the holy Fathers, the observance of which leads a man to the height of perfection. <sup>3</sup>What page or what utterance of the divinely inspired books of the Old and the New Testament is not a true guide for human life? <sup>4</sup>Or, what book of the holy Catholic Fathers does not loudly proclaim how we may go straight to our Creator? <sup>5</sup>So, too, the collations of the Fathers, and their institutes and lives, and the rule of our holy Father, Basil—<sup>6</sup>what are they but the monuments of the virtues of exemplary and obedient monks? <sup>7</sup>But for us, who are slothful, unobservant, and negligent monks, they make us blush for shame and confusion.*

*<sup>8</sup>You, therefore, who are hastening to the heavenly home, with the help of Christ keep this little rule written for beginners; <sup>9</sup>and then you shall, with God's help, attain at last to the greater heights of knowledge and virtue which we have mentioned above.*