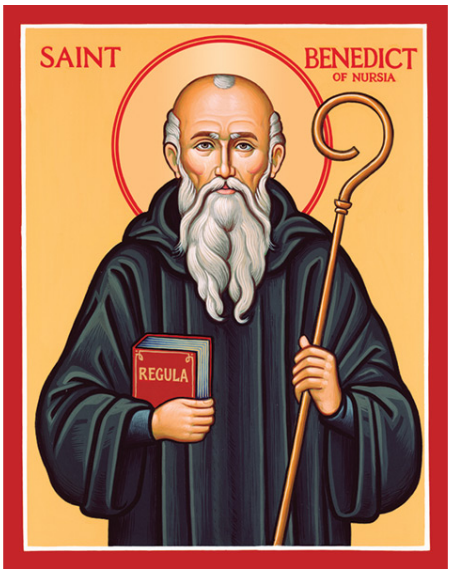
THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT



1. First of all, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.

2. Then, to love thy neighbor as thyself.

3. Next, not to kill.

4. Not to commit adultery.

5. Not to steal.

6. Not to covet.

7. Not to bear false witness.

8. To honor all men.

9. Not to do to another what one would not have done to oneself.

10. To deny oneself in order to follow Christ.

11. To chastise the body.

12. Not to seek after luxuries.

13. To love fasting.

14. To refresh the poor.

15. To clothe the naked.

16. To visit the sick.

17. To bury the dead.

18. To help in affliction.

19. To console the sorrowing.

20. To keep aloof from worldly actions.

21. To prefer nothing to the love of Christ.

22. Not to follow the promptings of anger.

23. Not to seek an occasion of revenge.

24. Not to foster deceit in one's heart.

25. Not to make a feigned peace.

26. Not to forsake charity.

27. Not to swear, lest perhaps one perjure oneself.

28. To utter the truth with heart and lips.

29. Not to render evil for evil.

30. To do no wrong to anyone, but to bear patiently any wrong done to oneself.

31. To love one's enemies.

32. Not to speak ill of those who speak ill of us, but rather to speak well of them.

33. To suffer persecution for justice' sake.

34. Not to be proud.

35. Not to be given to wine.

36. Not to be a glutton.

37. Not to be given to sleep.

38. Not to be slothful.

39. Not to be a murmurer.

40. Not to be a detractor.

41. To put one's trust in God.

42. To attribute any good one sees in oneself to God and not to oneself.

43. But always to acknowledge that the evil is one's own, and to attribute it to oneself.

44. To fear the days of judgment.

45. To be in dread of hell.

46. To desire everlasting life with all spiritual longing.

47. To keep death daily before one's eyes.

48. To keep guard at all times over the actions of one's life.

49. To know for certain that God sees one in every place.

50. To dash upon Christ one's evil thoughts the instant they come to one's heart, and to manifest them to one's spiritual father.

51. To keep one's mouth from speech that is wicked or full of guile.

52. Not to love much speaking.

53. Not to speak words that are vain or such as provoke laughter.

54. Not to love much or noisy laughter.

55. To listen willingly to holy reading.

56. To apply oneself frequently to prayer.

57. Daily with tears and sighs to confess one's sins to God in prayer, and to amend these evils for the future.

58. Not to fulfill the desires of the flesh.

59. To hate one's own will.

60. To obey in all things the commands of the Abbot, even though he himself (which God forbid) should act otherwise, being mindful of that precept of the Lord: "What they say, do ye; but what they do, do ye not"

61. Not to wish to be called holy before one is so, but first to be holy that one may be truly so called.

62. To fulfill the commandments of God daily by one's deeds.

63. To love chastity.

64. To hate no man.

65. To have no jealousy or envy.

66. Not to love strife.

67. To fly from vainglory.

68. To reverence one's seniors.

69. To love one's juniors.

70. To pray for one's enemies in the love of Christ.

71. To make peace with those with whom one is at variance before the setting of the sun.

72. And never to despair of God's mercy.

Behold, these are the instruments of the spiritual art, which, if they be constantly employed by day and by night, and delivered up on the day of judgment, will gain for us from the Lord that reward which He Himself has promised: "Eye has not see, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him." And the workshop in which we are to labor diligently at all these things is the enclosure of the monastery and stability in the community.