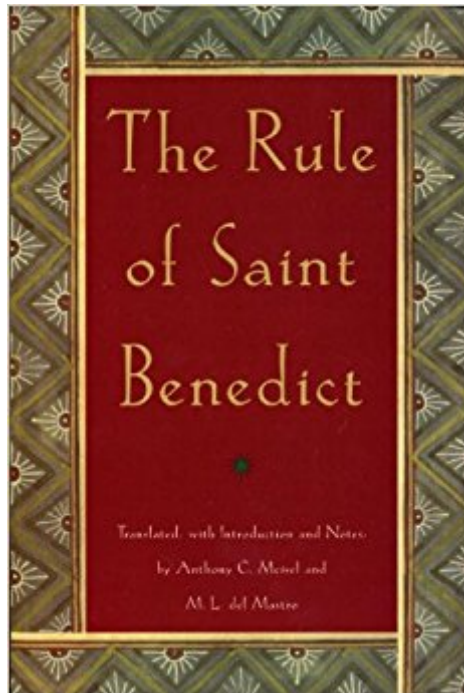


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The Rule Of St. Benedict (An Image Book Original)



Synopsis

From the time it was first promulgated in the sixth century, The Rule of St. Benedict has been one of the most influential, enduring documents of Western civilization. Composed for the guidance of his own monks at Monte Cassino, St. Benedict's Rule has become the basis for the rules of practically every Christian monastic community in the West. In it are the guidelines for living the spiritual life -- through work, prayer, study, obedience, community, and moderate asceticism. This acclaimed edition of The Rule of St. Benedict is a highly accessible modern translation that conveys the spirit and logic of the original text. It contains an invaluable in-depth Introduction that explores the development and spread of Christian monasticism; a biographical sketch of St. Benedict; a discussion of the structure and implementation of his Rule; its value and impact on religious orders from the Middle Ages down through history; its tremendous influence on Western culture and civilization; and, finally, various texts of the Rule.

Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Doubleday/Image Books (September 1, 1975)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385009488

ISBN-13: 978-0385009485

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.4 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #97,358 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Monasticism & Asceticism](#) #12 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Worship & Devotion > Monasticism & Asceticism](#) #67 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Institutions & Organizations](#)

Customer Reviews

Text: English, Latin (translation)

Since the 6th century, this has been one of the most influential documents of Western thought and civilization. Full of plain wisdom, the words of St. Benedict are a guide for work, prayer, study, and community life.

I am from a reformed Baptist / Presbyterian Protestant background and have only recently discovered (with delight) the Evangelical Anglican Church in North America. Anyhow, one of our small church groups read Christian classics, not to accept them uncritically, but rather to relearn, or become reacquainted with practices of Christians, centuries earlier, with the goal of living today, as Christians who "matter" and make a difference. We are looking at the disciplines, particularly prayer, dedicated "missionary teams", and practices that are "lost" today like fasting, having times of silence, and so on. There is a lot to think about. We feel free to agree with some ideas, like humility, times of silence, eating less, praying deliberately, submitting to authority. The kindle version is easy to read. I struggle with the VOLUNTARY ? "socialist" ? idea of owning nothing, communal ownership; That one is a bit tough and a challenge for an independent minded American ! I do not find it, an unbiblical idea. Those who submit to such "rules" will experience a voluntary, civilian - religious, version of military authority, and real discipline, not totally unattractive. We decided we would not beat with sticks, or belts, laggards, lazy ones, and persons slow to obey Christ in our own community. A very profitable book, if read in the right spirit, particularly for serious Christians, Christian leaders, and those who seek WORTHY Christian leadership. The book is a great starting point.

This is a review of the Kindle edition of this translation of The Rule of St. Benedict. I have read the entire book on paper a few years ago, but by writing and teaching about religion, I find this is one book I must come back to frequently. It is not the first writing on organized monasticism. Monasticism grew up in the eastern and southern deserts very early, and St. Basil wrote about them close to 200 years before Benedict. But Benedict's rule puts everything in one place, and it is observed, in some form or another, by several organizations, including some which are not Catholic. Therefore, as someone who writes about religion, I must often go back to it to recall what it says, as I did yesterday when I needed to see Benedict's statement on the canonical hours. I found that quickly, because this edition has an active Table of Contents for all 73 chapters, even though some are less than a page long. I looked at some of the 99 cent editions, and I found poor organization and no active contents. Since St. Benedict's rule is so simple and easy to understand, I don't feel the need for a lot of introduction or commentary, but I liked the introduction since it gave some perspective on the consequences of monasteries, which are not evident from Benedict's rule. For example, by the 12th century, theology was done primarily by monks who were professors at that new idea called a university. But in Benedict's time, there was no such thing. Theology was written by priests and bishops. Unless you can find a dramatically superior feature (such as facing

Latin text) I would go with this edition rather than one of those more expensive.

Excellent.

I like the book.

While the historical context that is so lucidly described in the introduction to this translation is fascinating in itself, the rule resonates with a disciplined approach to spiritual development in a communal setting. Placed in an appropriate historical context the "rule" is remarkable for its attention to physical and spiritual detail in the structured life of a monastery. Anyone interested in monasticism or church history will be well rewarded by reading this.

Like New

I had heard a lot of quotes from various saints, including Benedict, but this was my first attempt to read some of their writing. It was well worth it. The first part of the book gives a solid background on Benedict, his experiences and where he was coming from. It also oriented me to what the rules were about. This is an instruction book for people who took a vow that is pretty overwhelming for most people to comprehend today. St Benedict makes one really consider what is needed in life and to whom we owe what. In rule 55 he says, "Bedding shall consist of a mattress, coverlet, blanket, and pillow. The abbot will make frequent inspections of the bedding to prevent hoarding. Any infractions are subject to the severest discipline and, so that this vice of private ownership may be cut away at the roots, the abbot is to furnish all necessities: cowl, tunic, shoes, stockings, belt, knife, pen, needle, towel, and writing tablet. With these, any excuse for need will be vanquished. (hmmm, I wonder how many motorcycles I really need?) I was really starting to get into the whole thing and feeling the humility St. Benedict calls for until I got to the part about the harsh treatment of the youngest members of the monastery. That set me back a little bit but in the end, there is a lot to learn here about one's self, one's God, and the need to find a simpler life of faith and humility.

I was required to read this for a Christian History class, and because I am Lutheran, I've got a few things to say to Benedict's ideas. In Benedict's defense, this is a very well-laid out piece of literature. Its organization is stellar - to the point that it works REALLY WELL if you need to write a paper to respond to the ideas of early (and possibly current, though don't quote me on that) Catholics.

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