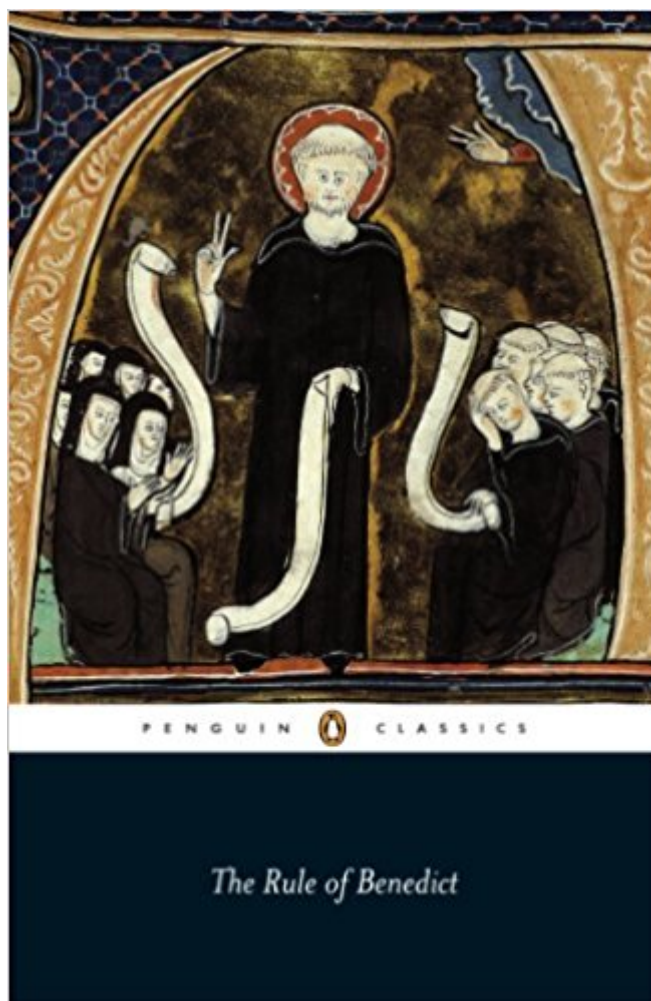


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The Rule Of St Benedict (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

The inspirational work that has been guiding Benedictine monks for fifteen centuries Founder of a monastery at Monte Cassino, between Rome and Naples, in the sixth century, St Benedict intended his Rule to be a practical guide to Christian monastic life. Based on the key precepts of humility, obedience and love, its aim is to create a harmonious and efficient religious community in which individuals can make progress in the Christian virtues and gain eternal life. Here, Benedict sets out ideal monastery routines and regulations, from the qualities of a good abbot, the twelve steps to humility and the value of silence to such every day matters as kitchen duties, care of the sick and the suitable punishment for lateness at mealtimes. Benedict's legacy is still strong - his Rule remains a source of inspiration and a key work in the history of the Christian church. Carolinne White's accessible translation is accompanied by an introduction discussing Benedict's teachings, what is known of his life, and the influence and spread of his Rule. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Saint Benedict of Nursia (c. 480 AD – 543 AD) founded twelve monasteries, the best known of which was his first monastery at Monte Cassino in Italy. Benedict wrote a set of rules governing his monks, the Rule of Saint Benedict, one of the more influential documents in Western Civilization. Benedict was canonized a saint in 1220. Carolinne White was born in London and read Classics and Modern Languages at St. Hugh's College, Oxford. She wrote a doctoral thesis on Christian ideas of friendship in the fourth century, published in 1992. After 2 years spent teaching Latin at UNISA in Pretoria, she returned to Oxford where she worked on the supplement to the Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon and taught Patristic and Medieval Latin. She now divides her time between work as an assistant editor on the Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, translation work, and her four children. Her publications include a translation of the correspondence between Jerome and Augustine (1990), *Early Christian Lives* (published by Penguin in 1998), and an anthology of Early Christian Latin poetry in translation (2000).

The Rule of St. Benedict is an excellent, quick read that helps the reader understand the aims and mindset of early Christian monks. Writing in the 6th century AD, St. Benedict laid down a short set of guidelines and rules for those entering or already in monasteries. One gets the distinct impression from reading his Rule that Benedict was a devout yet practical man, sincerely interested in both maintaining discipline and helping his brothers grow. The guidelines he lays down--from the rotation of Psalms to be sung throughout the week to selection of readers during mealtime--are never arbitrary and always supported by either practical experience or principle from the scriptures. The Rule is very short--just over 100 pages in this edition--divided into 73 chapters, many of which are only one paragraph long. Each deals with some topic of monastic life, whether it be clothing, the various daily services, provision for the sick or elderly, appointment of priors and gatekeepers, work, food, singing, talking, sleeping, and how much a monk should be allowed to drink. Carolinne White's new translation reads clearly and at a brisk pace, making a potentially dull excursion into monasticism (itself not usually a very thrilling subject) into an illuminating and enjoyable experience. Included are an introduction and endnotes, both of which are informative but probably unnecessary to anyone already familiar with Christianity in general and monasticism in particular. The notes do help explain a few textual issues, such as unusual or untranslatable terms, though a note on "inclusive language" tacked onto the end of the introduction comes across as silly. Overall, this is a good read for anyone interested in history, Christianity, monastic life, or simply the pursuit of holiness. Recommended.

Few books have been more influential to the faith of Christians over the centuries than this one. The reasons are clear upon reading it: St. Benedict calls for a shared life of prayer and service to Christ that is very compelling. It is demanding without being extreme. It is personal without being individualistic. It is communal without being institutional. It is a manifesto of faith like few others. This particular ebook is well designed for reading, navigation, use of footnotes, etc. Well worth spending the few extra dollars.

excellent historical read that was presented with proper context.

Provides the basis for Benedictine philosophy. Original text so not much else to comment on. A good "Library basic" book.

As the title says, it would be good if the verse number is included for readers' convenience of referencing. That is all.

The Rule of St. Benedict is enlightening for anyone wanting to discover medieval monasticism. However, the rather rigid rule and the solution of "corporal punishment" for minor offenses is what has made monks the object of Hollywood criticism in films like Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood* (2010). The severity of service in the Benedictine order and the concept that one can merit their way to heaven through deeds and self denial violates The Holy Scriptures that say: "If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9) "If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God." (1 John 14:15) "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9). "He has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time," (2 Timothy 1:9) "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5) The Bible clearly proclaims that a believer is required only to believe (trust) in Jesus Christ and declare Him as Lord and Savior publicly. There is no need for harsh manual labor, penances, laying down on cobblestone floor in the shape of the cross, beatings, and other acts of self denial and mutilation like the coarse hair shirt. These practices actually are antichrist in nature and make light of Christ's Passion. The singular text that monastics use as defense is written by St.

Paul, "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling," (Philippians 2:12). However, the same Apostle says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9), "He has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time," (2 Timothy 1:9), and "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5). Thus one must ask, how can you develop an entire doctrine of "works" and meriting salvation when Paul who wrote Philippians 2:12, also writes counter-claims. Is there something we are missing? Yes, the answer is better translated "maintain your salvation with fear and trembling." It is possible to lose your salvation (2 Peter 2:20-21). However, the Benedictine monks behave like they have already lost their salvation and thus work to get it back through austere and ascetic living. The Scriptures say of losing salvation, "and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people back to repentance; by rejecting the Son of God, they themselves are nailing him to the cross once again and holding him up to public shame." (Hebrews 6:6). Traditionally before the Medieval Church and after it, the public shame part of that scripture is believed to be the criterion for how a person falls away. The monks are obviously not turning away from God, so they are not in danger of this and yet they still try to merit the "free gift of salvation?" Monasticism has its appeal: separation from the corrupt world, singular devotion of the faith, and serving with community of brothers. The actual lifestyle is alluring, though it violates the Great Commission, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15-16). How do monks and nuns for that matter fulfill this command of Christ? The Mendicant orders such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians did; they went and preached to people (especially the Dominicans). But the Benedictines and the offshoot known as Cistercians were cloistered and endeavored to seldom speak. St. Benedict the founder is famous for his piety and This Rule he wrote. The Rule became a basis for many monastic orders in Middle Ages to the Modern Era. His most controversial claims are "corporal punishment" or beatings to build up brothers and break their bad habits (ironic word use, since monks wore habits); and his twisted use of Scripture to support his ideology of "complete obedience." The Abbot is to whom all the brothers are to submit; no matter what the Abbot is right even when wrong, because the Abbot is appointed by the Lord (Divine Right of Clergy, like Divine Right of Kings) and even if the Abbot asks you to do things he cannot or would

not do; you must obey (welcome back Pharisees). St. Benedict's strict rule of discipline, obedience, and chastity is a formula for religious legalism and distortion of the faith. Jesus Christ said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30). Benedict did not seem to read or heed this statement of his Savior. How is it an easy and light burden to enforce strict discipline, shame, celibacy, and obedience. Jesus clearly says he is "gentle of spirit," so using a rod to beat monk brothers does not fit with Christ's character, nor does it invoke "rest" for those brothers who now live in fear of a beating. The Rule of St. Benedict is a great tool for learning what religious legalism without the spirit of Christ or the Holy Spirit. Benedict's "obedience without question," and the other severities show us a glimpse into Medieval monasticism and how it strayed from the Savior Jesus Christ's own words in the Bible. Benedict sadly created societies of sadism and strict discipline instead of sanctuary for saints who were "weary and in need of rest.." If you want to understand austere monasticism and know the spirit of religion, then look no further. If you want spiritual growth, spiritual health, spiritual happiness, and closeness to God who is The Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit then open The Holy Bible (NIV, NKJV, NASB, TLB) and read the New Testament.

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