

SYLLABUS FOR NOVITIATE COURSE ON THE HOLY RULE

Preface:

- Different ways to teach the Rule
- How to break down the Rule
- How does it apply to you today?
- How does it apply to your monastery?

Methodologies:

- Videos
- Webinars

The program must be paced and ordered according to quality of candidates. This would dictate the medium used. Above list is a compliment to what is used in-house. This is meant to be one of many resources. Individual houses should be free to pick and choose.

- avoid a universal calendar. Different emphases according to candidates' different backgrounds and levels of education.
- cannot be a one-size-fits-all program
- we want them to live according to the *spirit* of the Rule. Novitiate isn't "college and university." It's not just a year of academic exercise; it's a year of building a base/foundation for holiness.
- spirit and letter of the Rule are connected but it is 'example' that remains. Masters must live what they teach.

Divide *Rule* thematically

1. Monastic Call and Goal
 - a. Chapters, 73, 72, Prologue
 - b. Terrence Kardong Reading Benedict Backwards
2. Kinds of monks
 - a. Chapters 1, 62,
 - b. Chapter 62 allows for discussions of the priest / lay brother distinction that has had an effect on many of our communities.
3. Tools of good works
 - a. Chapter 4
4. Silence
 - a. Chapters 6, 20, 42,
5. Obedience
 - a. Chapters 5, 63, 68

6. Humility
 - a. Chapters 7, 20, 63
7. Hospitality
 - a. Chapters 53, 54, 56, 61
8. Community living
 - a. Chapters 3, 4, 22, 32-41, 47-48, 50-51, 53-57, 63, 67, 69-72
 - b. This section can be subdivided into other smaller chunks such as zeal etc...
9. Governance: Abbot and officials of the monastery
 - a. Chapters 2, 3, 21, 31, 56, 62-66
10. Liturgical code
 - a. Chapters 8-20, 42, 45, 49, 52, 62
11. Penal code
 - a. Chapters 23-30, 43-46
12. New members
 - a. Chapters 58-60, 63

Exercises

- Memorization, first 3 and last 3 paragraphs of the prologue.
- Read the entire rule in one sitting with the novices.
- Instruct novices to copy out by hand the entire rule.

Bibliography

Chittister, Joan, and Robert Pohl. *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Leader's Guide*. San Francisco, Calif: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992. Print.

Wise and enduring spiritual guidelines for everyday living – as relevant today as when The Rule was originally conceived by St. Benedict in fifth century Rome.

Chittister, Joan. *The Rule of Benedict: Insights for the Ages*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. Print.

A commentary on St. Benedict's treatise on the monastic life, written around 400 A.D., showing how his rules apply to twentieth-century living.

Delatte, Paul, and Justin McCann. *The Rule of St. Benedict: A Commentary*. Middletown, DE: s.n., 2016. Print.

This rule has been harmonized with the 1917 Code of Canon Law and contains the original Latin of the rule with English translation and commentary. The man of God, Benedict, among the many wonderful works that made him famous in this world, was also conspicuous for his teaching: for he wrote a Rule for monks, remarkable for discretion and rich in instruction. If anyone desires to know more deeply the life and character of the man, he may find in the ordinances of that Rule the exact image of his whole government: for the holy man cannot possibly have taught otherwise than as he lived." To this judgement of St. Gregory the Great, I so complete for all its grace of form

and sobriety of language, we may yet add two observations: first that the moral beauty of St. Benedict, his temperament and almost his characteristics, are reflected also in the pages, at once candid and profound, of his biographer; secondly, that the Rule itself came, in the middle of the sixth century, as the ripe fruit of a considerable monastic past and of the spiritual teaching of the Fathers. St. Benedict was above all else a man of tradition. He was not the enthusiastic creator of an entirely new form of the religious life: neither nature nor grace disposed him to such a course. As may be seen from the last chapter of his Rule, he cared nothing for a reputation of originality, or for the glory of being a pioneer. He did not write till late, till he was on the threshold of eternity, after study and perhaps after experience of the principal monastic codes. Nearly every sentence reveals almost a fixed determination to base his ideas on those of the ancients, or at least to use their language and appropriate their terms.

De, Waal Esther. *A Life-Giving Way: A Contemplative Commentary on the Rule of St Benedict.* , 2013. Print.

This reflective commentary explores the Rule of St Benedict from the perspective of someone whose life and faith has been shaped by its gentle wisdom and realism. Its approach is personal and contemplative; it is written for all who seek to deepen their Christian understanding and discipleship.

Holzherr, George. *The Rule of St. Benedict in English: A Guide to Christian Living.* Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1994. Print.

Vogue, Adalbert . *The Rule of St. Benedict: a Doctrinal and Spiritual Commentary.* Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1983. Print.

Kardong, Terrence. *Asking Benedict: A Study Program on the Rule of St. Benedict : for Classes and Private Use.* Richardton, N.D: Assumption Abbey Press, 1992. Print.

Kardong, Terrence, and Benedict. *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary.* Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1996. Internet resource.

Possible Presenters/authors:

- Michael Casey, Australia
- Enrique Contreras, Argentina
- Augustin Roberts, Argentina
- Columba Stewart, USA
- Placid Solari, USA
- Bernardo Olivera, Argentina
- Terrence Kardong
- Sr. Joan Chittister
- Aquinata Bockmann
- George Holzherr
- Hubert Von Zeller

- Paul Delatte
- Abbot John Klassen (video)
- Esther DeWahl
- Fr Bernardo Geraldo Burquez OSB Tepeyac Abbey**