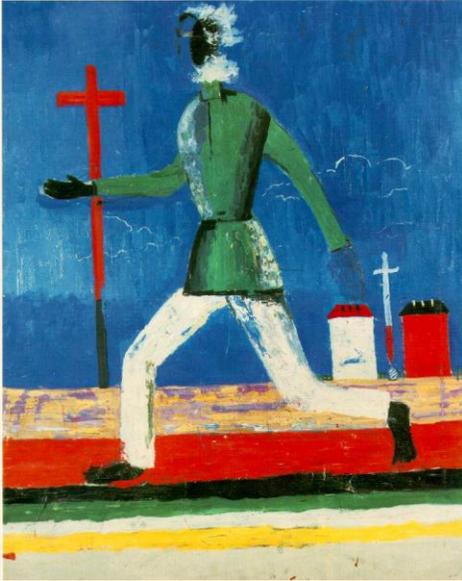


## Part Eight Hastening Toward Home



“This, then, is the good zeal which members must foster with fervent love: ‘They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other,’ supporting with the greatest patience one another’s weaknesses of body or behavior...” - RB 72:3-5

“Are you hastening toward your heavenly home? Then with Christ’s help, keep this little rule that we have written for beginners.” - RB 73:8

At the very end of his Rule Benedict calls his guidebook “a little rule...for beginners.” To anyone who tries to follow its precepts this description may seem misleading. The Benedictine way often feels neither little nor for beginners. On further reflection it seems that this was not false humility on Benedict’s part.

The Rule is clearly meant to be a way for ordinary people, not special spiritual adepts. Throughout his Rule Benedict assumes that most of us want to seek God but we often have trouble doing so. Benedict recognizes the human reality that we need guidance and help along the way. We need the support of a community to grow, change and become all that God calls us to be.

The insights of Benedict’s Rule call us to a deeper life in Christ, no matter what our station in life. Benedict calls us to listen to the “delightful voice of God” in our life. In silence and listening we hear how God is calling us to deeper relationship. When we listen with the “ear of our heart” we begin to respond to God’s love.

In responding to God’s call we begin to structure our life differently. Balance is the hallmark of Benedictine spirituality. We are no longer consumed by our work or possessions but see the need for moderation and balance, to have enough, but not too much. Prayer becomes a central axis of our day and we want to spend time with God.

As we continue on our way we see the need for community. We realize that our relationship to God is corporate, not simply individual. We uphold each other, we depend on each other and together we seek God and come to everlasting life.

### **Next Steps:**

- How is God calling you to put into practice what you have learned in this retreat? What realistic, practical steps can you take to implement your insights?

- Would you like to learn more about the various ways people live the Rule of Benedict? Consider some of these resources:

- **Religious Life:** Many men and women make a lifetime commitment to a particular Benedictine community. Benedictine communities are always open to people who are considering a vocation to their way of life.

- Monastery of Saint Gertrude: [www.stgertrudes.org](http://www.stgertrudes.org)

- OSB page: [www.osb.org](http://www.osb.org)

- **Oblates:** Often people are attracted to Benedictine life but not to a vowed commitment. Many people today are connected to Benedictine communities as oblates, lay members who remain in their current life situation but make a commitment to a particular Benedictine community. Most monasteries today have active oblate programs.

- **Other connections:** People continue to find new and innovative ways to bring the ancient insights of the Benedictine way to modern life. We wish you God's blessing as you respond to the call of God's delightful voice in your life.



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