

Rule of st. benedict and the prayer of st. francis



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Rule of St. Benedict and the Prayer of St. Francis The development of monasticism was one of the most influential elements that contributed to the growth of Christianity in the early years of its history. In the Christian tradition, monasticism refers to a way of religious living which is embraced by the monks as a vocation and it keeps them close to the rules of God rather than the laws and desires of the materialistic world. The spirit of monasticism can be traced in the Beatitudes which were announced during the Sermon of the Mount and the monks live a life the right way according to the law of God as opposed to the laws of the world. It is essential to comprehend that the scriptural examples and ideals provided the basis of monasticism and the way of living. Significantly, a variety of monastic traditions have contributed to the growth of the religious life within the Catholic Church. The regulation of monasticism was mainly carried out by the various religious rules such as the Rule of St Basil and the Rule of St Benedict in the early periods of monasticism and these rules were strictly observed by the monks. However, the Church laws of different denominations began to regulate monasticism in the later periods and there was a great change in the attitude towards these religious rules. The selections from the Rule of St. Benedict and the Prayer of St. Francis as given in the textbook provide an important illustration of the monastic traditions of different periods in the Church history. In spite of their apparent differences, both of these texts make sense in the context of the monastic traditions of the different periods. A comparative analysis of these two texts explains how monasticism fits into the Christian tradition generally and these texts provide the most effective demonstrations of the religious rules of different monastic traditions.

In an analysis of the selection from the Rule of St. Benedict, one comes to recognize the example of the monastic tradition of the early stages of monasticism. The Rule of St. Benedict belongs to the first half of the sixth century and illustrates the severity of the religious attitudes towards the way of life for the monks. The rules relating to excommunication for faults were on the basis of the commands of Jesus Christ who urged first to admonish the person going wrong and then to abandon him. In fact, the Rule of St. Benedict about excommunication for faults illustrates how severely and closely was the commandments of the Lord were observed by the monastic tradition of the early period. The rules specified in the Rule of St. Benedict have close resemblance to the commandments of Jesus Christ and the laws were strictly observed by the monks of the time. " If a brother be found contumacious or disobedient, proud or grumbler, or in any way acting contrary to the holy Rule and despising the orders of the seniors, let him, according to the Lord's commandment, be privately admonished once and twice by his seniors. If he do not then amend, let him be publically rebuked before all. But if even then he do not correct himself, let him be subjected to excommunication, if he understands the gravity of this penalty. If, however, he is incorrigible, let him undergo corporal chastisement." (245) There are other pertinent aspects of the Rule of St. Benedict which suggest the spirit of monasticism at this particular period in the history and the monks were not allowed to possess anything as personal belongings.

The Prayer of St. Francis, in comparison, illustrates the spirit of monasticism at another crucial period in the history of monasticism and the prayer also clearly reflects the teachings of Christ who came up with the great message of forgiveness and love. This prayer, which emphasizes values such as

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peace, love, forgiveness, faith, hope, light and joy, also reflect the spirit of the monastic way of living in the particular period. " Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy." (248)

To conclude, the Rule of St. Benedict and the Prayer of St. Francis illustrate the spirit of the monastic tradition in different contexts of monasticism and both reflect the religious rules pertaining to both the monastic traditions.

Work Cited

World Religions: Western Tradition. P 245-248.