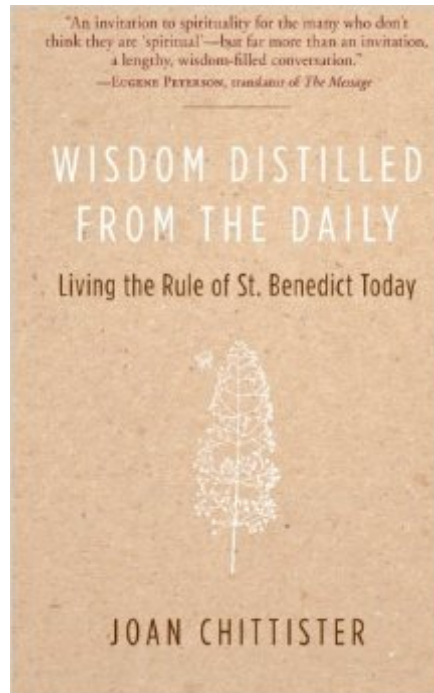


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Wisdom Distilled From The Daily: Living The Rule Of St. Benedict Today



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

‘Daily life is the stuff of which high sanctity can be made.’ Near the beginning of Joan Chittister’s wonderful treatment of the Rule of St. Benedict, she makes this statement, something that is agreed upon by most who are serious about the spiritual life. The old phrase ‘little things mean a lot’ is very true with regard to spirituality. After all, it is not the big crises that cause the most problems in life -- in fact, it is often a crisis that brings people together and deepens spiritual feeling and commitment. It is in the day-to-day struggle to maintain sanity and security that the spirit can be ignored most easily, unless paying attention to spiritual things is made intentional. This is part of what Benedict was driving at so many centuries ago. Beyond the specific rules for his community, which are variously applicable and irrelevant toward living in today’s world, is the overarching idea that some kind of rule, some kind of daily intentionality, some sort of deliberate pattern that puts us in community with each other and with the divine is very necessary for today’s people. ‘After years of monastic life I have discovered that unlike spiritual fads, which come and go with the teachers or cultures that spawned them, the Rule of Benedict looks at the world through interior eyes and lasts. Here, regardless of who we are or what we are, life and purpose meet.’ Spirituality of this sort is far more than ritual action. It is far more than churchiness or how often one does any particular thing,

including prayer. This spirituality calls upon the individual to incorporate a way of life on top of daily life, a defining context of life that puts all things, prayer, church, family, work, play, study, sleep, indeed all parts of life, in connection and community with God.

I. Synopsis Chittister believes that the everyday life of every person contains wisdom, truth, beauty, potential, and perhaps even God. But it's not her idea, at least originally. The Rule of St. Benedict, penned by a humble 4th century monk, has for centuries served as the corner-stone text and instruction manual for the Benedictine religious order, and now reemerges as the basis of Chittister's "Wisdom." In short, the Rule is a guide to Christian spirituality that at its roots emphasizes balance, community and a lifetime of personal conversion. It is simple in that it is for everyone, regardless of education and status. It is comprehensive in that it proposes a complete way of life. Finally, the Rule is realistic: it advances balance between work and leisure, promising only peace at the end of a life of trying yet not necessarily accomplishing. Chittister's frames the highlights of the Rule in an effort to guide 20th century Christians in the ways of ancient monastics. She begins simply with the core skills of Benedictine living: listening, and prayer or lectio. Listening means living with ears attuned to the call of Christ (to Benedictines, this is represented in a Monastery bell), thus creating a spirituality sentient of the presence of God in our lives and also the presence of others. Prayer and lectio, the act of prayerful meditation on scripture, for the listening Christian then becomes the center of life. It is regular, universal, reflective, communal and converting (p. 29) thus cracking open the door and letting God enter daily life.

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