

10-16-2022

A monk was being interviewed by a reporter who was writing an article on what life was like in the monastery. The reporter asked the monk, "What's the hardest thing about being a monk?" Without hesitation the monk said, "Other monks"

I recently referred to a book called *Humility Rules, Saint Benedict's 12-Step Guide to Genuine Self Esteem*. based on *The Rule of Saint Benedict* for his monks in the monastery. This small book is written by Father J. Augustine Wetta ,OSB, who is a monk in St. Louis. (And a funny guy. The picture on the cover of his book shows St. Benedict carrying a skateboard 🛹 ) But these are considered universal rules that have been used by monastics of many different religious orders down through the years. Now, even though we are not monks and do not live in monasteries, these rules are wise and it would behoove us to consider them for our own lives to the degree that we are able.

Again it's under the heading of PERSEVERANCE and it began with this quote from "Benedict's Rules": "*Above all, there should be no grumbling, not in word, not by gesture, not for any reason whatsoever. If anyone is caught grumbling, he should be severely disciplined.*"

Well, that sounds like kind of a tough one. What does he expect of us? Does he want to take away all our fun?

Fr. Wetta, reflecting the thought of the saint, says that "*nothing will take the wind out of your sails like grumbling.....This is Benedict's pet peeve, and he mentions it eight times in The Rule.*"

He goes on, relying on scripture, "*If you think about it, an outright fight is easier on a community than that ceaseless, cowardly, whining gossip that comes from a grumbler who spreads strife and separates close friends*". (Proverbs 16/28). "*Unlike direct disobedience, grumbling makes everyone restless and angry – including the grumbler himself. They learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.*" (1 Timothy 5-13).

A little addenda from myself. Another word for grumbling is *murmuring*. This term was used in *The Book of Exodus* when God was very angry at His Chosen People for murmuring in light of the many blessings they enjoyed as He brought them out of Egypt into the Promised Land. If you ever saw the movie *The 10 Commandments* from the early 50s, you might remember a character named *Dathan*. (He was a real person and had an unfortunate ending.) But he was the ultimate 'murmurur'. Maybe a better term would be 'gadfly', or even 'naysayer'.

Every chapter in Fr. Wetta's book has some little homework assignment attached. My favorite is the one at the end of the first chapter which says, "*Spare the life of a bug today. Bonus points if its a mosquito.*"

The assignment for this chapter on PERSEVERANCE is, "*Keep your next opinion to yourself*".

I just finished the book. His last homework assignment was ....*Give this book away*. We'll, I've just given a part of it to you.

But, again, this is all about living virtuously, and I think that this book, like that Joan of Arc book I mentioned earlier, would be a good gift to our young people, particularly our middle schoolers, here at Holy Spirit who, throughout the year, are all being trained in virtues which should give

them a better sense of what self-esteem is really all about, and thus help them to better prepare a firm foundation for a happy and peaceful adulthood.

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