

## STATIO FEBRUARY 2011

### RB 72 The Good Zeal of Monks

Our Holy Father Benedict put his whole heart and mind into chapter 72, which can be seen as a summary of his own life and teaching. Let us look at this chapter during the month of February as the heart and centre of the whole Rule. What a conversion of our communities if each one of us tries daily with her heart to live RB 72. Can we try that together during 2011?

We know well that the original Latin text has to be translated for us and here the first interpretation starts. It follows the translation of Glenstal Abbey, where all direct and indirect references to the Bible are given. In the text itself words quoted from the bible are written in capital letters and to the right you see the references. Four times Benedict refers to the letter to the Romans, chapter 12. In order to understand the text better and in the context of living under the guidance of the gospel – as Benedict says in the Prologue – it is recommended that you take your bible and read as lectio divina the references together with RB 72.

#### RB 72 OF GOOD ZEAL WHICH MONKS MUST HAVE

1	Just as there is an evil BITTER ZEAL Which separates from God And LEADS to hell,	Cf. James 3:14 Mt 7:13; 1Cor 3:3; Cf. Gal 4:17-18
2	So there is a good zeal Which separates from vices And LEADS to God and TO EVERLASTING LIFE.	Cf. Mt 7:14; Jn 2:17; Gal 4:17-18
3	Let monks therefore Exercise this zeal with burning love,	Cf. Rom 12:10a
4	That is, LET THEM ANTICIPATE ONE ANOTHER WITH HONOUR.	Rom 12:10b: cf 15:7
5	And WITH utmost PATIENCE BEARING their weaknesses Whether of bodies or of characters	Cf Rom 12:12; Eph 4:2
6	Let them vie with one another In rendering mutual OBEDIENCE.	Cf 1 Pet 1:22
7	LET NO ONE SEEK HIS OWN INTERESTS BUT THOSE OF HIS NEIGHBOUR.	Cf 1 Cor 10:24,33; Phil 2:4
8	LET THEM WITH PURITY, OFFER THE LOVE OF BROTHERHOOD.	Cf. 1 Pet 1:22; 2:17; Rom 12:10a; 1 Tess 4:9; Heb 13:1
9	LET THEM FEAR GOD lovingly.	Cf. 1 Pet 2:17
10	Let them cherish their abbot With TRUE and HUMBLE love.	Cf. Eph 4:15; 1 Cor 4:21
11	Let them prefer absolutely nothing to Christ.	
12	May he bring us all alike to everlasting life.	

Now we listen to another translation by Leonhard Doyle OBlSB, Saint John's Abbey, 2001.

### Chapter 72: On the Good Zeal Which They Ought to Have

Just as there is an evil zeal of bitterness  
which separates from God and leads to hell,  
so there is a good zeal  
which separates from vices and leads to God  
and to life everlasting.

This zeal, therefore, the sisters should practice  
with the most fervent love.

Thus they should anticipate one another in honor (Rom. 12:10);  
most patiently endure one another's infirmities,  
whether of body or of character;  
vie in paying obedience one to another --  
no one following what she considers useful for herself,  
but rather what benefits another -- ;  
tender the charity of sisterhood chastely;  
fear God in love;  
love their Abbess with a sincere and humble charity;  
prefer nothing whatever to Christ.  
And may He bring us all together to life everlasting!

Our monastic life wants to foster the human integration of all elements of our beings, grounded in the experience of God's unconditional love. God becomes the centre of my life and not my ego, the true revolution. Each sister strives to progress on the ladder of humility, i.e. to deepen her knowledge of the truth about herself and God, so that she may live the fervent good zeal in her interpersonal, community and social relation. Being the first to show respect to another;

- Supporting with the greatest patience one another's weaknesses of body or behavior;
- Competing in obedience to one another;
- Seeking what she judges better for the other person over her personal interests;
- Giving herself in pure love to her sisters
- Following God's paths
- Loving the Prioress with sincere love
- Preferring nothing whatever to Christ
- Living daily in the hope that Christ will bring us all together to everlasting life.

If we truly try to live this daily we live a new way of relating, characterized by acknowledging and respecting our own and the other's dignity, and seeking the other's good. In all this: *never losing hope in God's mercy* which is the culmination of the instruments of good works RB 4:74.

### Questions for Reflection

How can I live RB 72 daily?

Do I really believe that God loves me unconditionally?

Which verses are especially important to practice for me?

How can I do that practically?

Preferring nothing whatever to Christ / what does that mean for me and how do I live that day after day?