

The Guild of Saint Benedict

Constitution

DESCRIPTION/PURPOSE

The GUILD OF SAINT BENEDICT (GSB) is an association of Christian folk who seek to grow in union with God by following Saint Benedict's way of the expanding heart (cf. RULE OF BENEDICT Prologue) as exemplified in his RULE.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the GSB is open to all professed Christians. One enters the GSB seeking to follow Benedict's RULE in keeping with one's state of life. Members of the GSB are 'oblates' in that they make their life an offering to God. However, the GSB is not canonically identified with any particular monastic order or community. The only identifying mark for a member of the GSB, other than active commitment to pray and work in the Benedictine way of peace, is the medal of St. Benedict.

Members of the GSB commit to:

- Daily recitation of the Divine Office [using the *Book of Common Prayer*, the *Benedictine Daily Prayer* book, or another acceptable formulary];
- Daily reading of *THE RULE* ;
- Daily engaging in *Lectio Divina*;
- Seek regular spiritual direction;
- Make a *quiet day* at least twice a year;
- Make an annual retreat;
- Pray for the members of the GSB daily;
- Seek to live 'the Good Zeal' (RB72) and practice hospitality (RB53) in accord with one's state of life;
- Seek to live out the Benedictine motto: *Pax. Ora et Labora Ut in Omnibus Glorificetur Deus.* [Peace. Pray and Work so that God may be Glorified in Everything.]
- Be a contributor (time, talent, treasure) to the Church, and to the work of the GSB;
- Attend the periodic meetings of the Great Chapter of the GSB.

ORGANIZATION

- **BECOMING A MEMBER:** One enters the membership of the GSB by vote of its GENERAL CHAPTER (i.e. membership). The initial rank is *apprentice*, which involves a year of practice under the care of a *capitular* assigned to accompany the apprentice on the journey to membership. Following successful completion of the apprenticeship one is advanced to the status of *capitular* upon recommendation of the companion and vote of the General Chapter.
 - Membership in the GSB is completely voluntary, as the Guild is a free association for spiritual growth and service. An apprentice or capitular may resign at any time or for

any reason. An apprentice or capitular who does not honor the agreed upon commitments of the Guild may be placed upon probation, or taken off the rolls of the Guild upon appropriate action by its governing body.

- The General Chapter, which meets biennially as a part of a retreat of the GSB is the governing body. It elects the membership, and the officers of the Guild. It also elects two capitulars to join the officers as the Little Chapter (which functions as the General Chapter between meetings).
- The General Chapter is under the spiritual oversight of an Episcopal Visitor (Patron).
- The officers of the GSB are:
 - The Dean is elected by the General Chapter for a 4 year term. The Dean is entrusted with oversight of the GSB's operation.
 - The Chaplain is elected by the General Chapter for a 4 year term. The Chaplain is charged with the spiritual welfare of the Guild (including oversight of apprenticeships and the organization of the Annual Retreat in consultation with the Little Chapter).
 - The Steward is elected by the General Chapter for a 4 year term. The Steward is entrusted with the financial concerns of the Guild, including disbursement of funds for charitable activities it undertakes.
 - The Clerk is elected by the General Chapter for a 4 year term. The Clerk is tasked with keeping the records of the Guild.
 - Elections should be held in such a manner as to stagger the Officers' terms of service.
 - Upon completion of their terms of office, Officers may not stand for reelection. One may stand for election again upon completion of a biennium off.
- Local/Regional Organization is by means of *cells* [a local grouping of 12 or less], which are then grouped into a regional *ward* [a ward should consist of no more than 5 cells], and overseen by an *Alder* elected by the capitulars of the ward and confirmed by the Little Chapter. Cells and Wards determine their meeting frequency and activities [periodic Quiet Days would ideally be organized at this level].
- Dues for the Guild are set by the General Chapter and should only seek to cover the cost of basic operational expenses. [No officer of the Guild is to be compensated for work done on its behalf, save for approved reimbursement of expenses.]

THE GOOD ZEAL – Chapter 72, THE RULE OF BENEDICT

Just as there is a wicked zeal of bitterness which separates from God and leads to hell, 2 so there is a good zeal which separates from evil and leads to God and everlasting life. 3 This, then, is the good zeal which monks must foster with fervent love: 4 They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other (Rom 12:10), 5 supporting with the greatest patience one another's weaknesses of body or behavior, 6 and earnestly competing in obedience to one another. 7 No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else. 8 To their fellow monks they show the pure love of brothers; 9 to God, loving fear; 10 to their abbot, unfeigned and humble love. 11 Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, 12 and may he bring us all together to everlasting life.

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