

respect to food be held to as regards them, but let there be gentle consideration exercised in their case and let them anticipate the regular hours for meals.

CHAPTER XXXVIII: CONCERNING THE WEEKLY READER

Reading ought not to be wanting to the brethren when they eat at table: and let not anyone presume to read there because he happens to have casually picked up the book, but let one who is to read for the whole week enter upon his office on the Lord's day: and when he enters upon his office let him, after the Mass and Communion, beg of all prayers for himself that God avert from him the spirit of pride: and let this versicle be said in the oratory thrice by all, he himself however beginning it: "Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord; and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise"; and so having received his blessing let him enter upon his office of reading: and let complete silence be kept so that the whispering of none be heard there, nor the voice of any but of him only who is reading: and let the brethren who are eating and drinking pass each other such things as they require so that no one may have to ask for anything; but if it should be necessary, it were better to make request by means of some sound-signal rather than by word of mouth: and let not anyone presume to ask any question there whether about the reading or otherwise, that occasion be not given for talking, unless by chance the superior wish to say anything briefly for the purpose of edification.

And let the brother who is weekly reader receive a "mixtum" before he begins to read, both because of the Holy Communion and also lest by chance it be too great strain upon him to keep his fast; and afterwards let him take his meal with the weekly kitcheners and the servitor. And let not all the brethren read or sing in order, but only those who may edify their hearers.

CHAPTER XXXIX: CONCERNING THE QUANTITY OF FOODS

We believe that for the daily refection in all the months of the year, alike when it is at the sixth hour of the day as when it is at the ninth, two cooked dishes will avail, in consideration of the weakness of different individuals, that he who perchance cannot eat of one may be sufficiently catered for by the other; so for all the brethren let two cooked dishes suffice; and if there be fruit in addition or young vegetables let there be added a third dish also. Of bread let one pound by weight suffice, whether there be but one meal, or both dinner and supper, though if they are going to sup let a third part from that same pound be kept back by the cellarer and served when they sup. But if by chance any hard work shall have been done, it shall be within the discretion and power of the abbot to make some addition, if it be expedient, so long as all surfeiting be avoided and he take care that indigestion never overcome the monks; for nothing is so adverse to any Christian as surfeiting, as says our Lord: "See to it that your hearts be not weighed down with surfeiting." And let not the same quantity be served to boys of tender age, but less than to their elders, moderation being observed in all cases. And let all abstain entirely from the eating of the flesh of quadrupeds, altogether excepting from this rule the weak and the sick.

CHAPTER XL: CONCERNING THE QUANTITY OF DRINK

Everyone has his own proper gift from God, one after this manner and another after that; and so it is with some misgiving we appoint the measure of other men's living: however, duly considering the infirmity of the weak we believe that half a pint of wine per head per day suffices; but let those to whom God gives the power of the endurance of abstinence know that they shall have their due reward. But if the necessities of the place, or the work, or the heat of the summer should call for more, let it stand within the discretion of the superior to grant more, he taking all care that neither surfeiting nor drunkenness creep in. Although we read that wine is by no means for monks, yet because in our time monks cannot be persuaded to see this, at all events let us agree as to this,

that we will not drink to satiety, but somewhat sparingly; because: “Wine makes even the wise to fall away.” But where the necessities of the place make it clear that not even the above mentioned measure can be found necessary, but less by far, or even none at all, let those who live there bless God and not murmur; for this especially is what we are admonishing, that they be free from murmuring.

CHAPTER XLI: AT WHAT HOURS THE BRETHREN OUGHT TO HAVE THEIR MEALS

From holy Easter until Pentecost let the brethren dine at the sixth hour and sup about sunset; but on the Wednesdays and Fridays during the whole summer, from Pentecost, unless the monks have field work, or the excessive heat of the summer tries them, let them fast until the ninth hour; and on the other days let them dine at the sixth hour. And they should continue to dine thus at the sixth hour if they have been doing field work or if the heat of the summer be oppressive; and let this be within the discretion of the abbot; and similarly let him modify and arrange everything in such wise that both souls be saved and also that what the brethren do they may do without just cause for murmuring. From the fourteenth of September until the beginning of Lent let them always dine at the ninth hour; but in Lent until Easter let them dine at an evening hour; but let that evening hour be so ordered that when dining they may not require the light of a lamp, but may be quite finished while daylight still lingers. And indeed on all occasions let the hour, whether of supper or dinner, be so suitably arranged that everything be done by daylight.

CHAPTER XLII: THAT NO ONE TALK AFTER COMPLINE

Monks ought to be zealous to keep silence at all times, but especially through the hours of the night. And so at every season, be it fast or non-fast: and when it is not a fast, soon after rising from supper, let them all go and sit down together and let one of them read the Conferences, or the lives of the fathers, or indeed anything that may be edifying to hear, but not the Heptateuch nor the Books of the Kings, because it would not be profitable for those of weak intelligence to hear this portion of Scripture at that hour of the day, though at other hours let them be read. But if it has been a fast day, then after Vespers and a short interval let them proceed to the reading of the Conferences as we have said; and let four or five pages, or as much as the time permits, be read, all meanwhile, during the reading, resorting to one and the same place, he even resorting thither who by chance has been occupied with some task that was assigned him. When then all are in their places, let Compline be said; and after coming out from Compline let no one be at liberty to talk to anyone again. But if anyone be found to have not strictly observed this rule of silence let him be subjected to severe punishment, except when there has been necessity of shewing hospitality, or when the abbot has given anyone an order; and let even that be carried out with the utmost gravity and moderation.

CHAPTER XLIII: CONCERNING THOSE WHO COME LATE TO THE WORK OF GOD OR TO TABLE

At the hour of divine office, as soon as the signal has been heard, let the monk leave whatever he may have in hand and make great haste, but with due gravity, that levity find no occasion; for let nothing be preferred before the Work of God. But if anyone shall have come in to night office after the Gloria of the ninety-fourth psalm, which for this very reason we particularly wish shall be said in a drawn out and scrupulously careful manner, let him not take his proper place in choir, but last of all, or in a place set apart by the abbot for such as are thus guilty of negligence,