

Let the Abbot Be Most Solicitous

by St. Benedict of Nursia

The Abbot should be most solicitous in his concern for delinquent brethren, showing compassion and care for those who are weak.

Scripture: Ezekiel 34:3, Matthew 9:12, Luke 15:4, 2 Corinthians 2:7-8

Topics: "Pastoral Care", "Spiritual Guidance"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of the Abbot's care for delinquent brethren, drawing inspiration from the words of Jesus that the sick need a physician. The Abbot is urged to seek wise counsel and support from mature brethren to guide and console those who are wavering, encouraging them to seek reconciliation and not be overwhelmed by grief. It is crucial for the Abbot to show utmost care and diligence in nurturing weak souls, following the example of the Good Shepherd who compassionately seeks out the lost sheep to bring them back to the flock.

Transcript

Let the Abbot be most solicitous in his concern for delinquent brethren, for "it is not the healthy but the sick who need a physician" (Matt 9:12) And therefore he ought to use every means that a wise physician would use. Let him send senpectae, that is, brethren of mature years and wisdom, who may as it were secretly console the wavering brother and induce him to make humble satisfaction; comforting him that he may not "be overwhelmed by excessive grief" (2 Cor. 2:7), but that, as the Apostle says, charity may be strengthened in him (2 Cor. 2:8). And let everyone pray for him.

For the Abbot must have the utmost solicitude and exercise all prudence and diligence lest he lose any of the sheep entrusted to him.

Let him know that what he has undertaken is the care of weak souls and not a tyranny over strong ones; and let him fear the Prophet's warning through which God says, "What you saw to be fat you took to yourselves, and what was feeble you cast away" (Ezec. 34:3,4). Let him rather imitate the loving example of the Good Shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep in the mountains and went to look for the one sheep that had gone astray, on whose weakness He had such compassion that He deigned to place it on His own sacred shoulders and thus carry it back to the flock (Luke 15:4-5).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/let-the-abbot-be-most-solicitous/>

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