

The Meals of the Sisters Should Not Be Without Reading

by St. Benedict of Nursia

The meals of the sisters should be a time for reading, silence, and respect for the appointed reader.

Scripture: Proverbs 15:28, Philippians 2:3, Colossians 4:6, James 1:19, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Monastic Life"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of incorporating reading and prayer into meals, appointing a designated reader for the week who seeks prayers for humility and divine guidance before reading. Absolute silence is to be maintained during meals, with the reader being the only one to speak. Requests for necessities are to be made through gestures rather than speech, and discussions unrelated to edification are discouraged. The designated reader is to prepare spiritually before reading, ensuring that the fast is not burdensome, and then share a meal with the kitchen and table servers of the week.

Transcript

The meals of the sisters should not be without reading. Nor should the reader be anyone who happens to take up the book; but there should be a reader for the whole week, entering that office on Sunday. Let this incoming reader, after Mass and Communion, ask all to pray for her that God may keep her from the spirit of pride. And let her intone the following verse, which shall be said three times by all in the oratory: "O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise." Then, having received a blessing, let her enter on the reading. And let absolute silence be kept at table, so that no whispering may be heard nor any voice except the reader's.

As to the things they need while they eat and drink, let the sisters pass them to one another so that no one need ask for anything.

If anything is needed, however, let it be asked for by means of some audible sign rather than by speech. Nor shall anyone at table presume to ask questions about the reading or anything else, lest that give occasion for talking; except that the Superior may perhaps wish to say something briefly for the purpose of edification. The sister who is reader for the week shall take a little ablution before she begins to read, on account of the Holy Communion and lest perhaps the fast be hard for her to bear. She shall take her meal afterwards with the kitchen and table servers of the week.

The sisters are not to read or chant in order, but only those who edify their hearers.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/the-meals-of-the-sisters-should-not-be-without-reading/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net