

We Think It Sufficient for the Daily Dinner

by St. Benedict of Nursia

St. Benedict emphasizes the importance of moderation and frugality in meals for monks to maintain their Christian character.

Scripture: Proverbs 23:20, Luke 21:34, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Philippians 4:5, Colossians 3:17

Topics: "Christian Living", "Temperance"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of moderation and frugality in daily meals, suggesting two cooked dishes for dinner with a third dish of fruits or vegetables if available. He advises a sufficient amount of bread for the day, with a portion reserved for supper if needed. The Abbot has the authority to adjust the meals based on the workload, but over-indulgence is to be avoided at all costs, as it goes against the Christian character. St. Benedict quotes Jesus' warning against being burdened with over-indulgence in Luke 21:34.

Transcript

We think it sufficient for the daily dinner, whether at the sixth or the ninth hour, that every table have two cooked dishes on account of individual infirmities, so that he who for some reason cannot eat of the one may make his meal of the other. Therefore let two cooked dishes suffice for all the brethren; and if any fruit or fresh vegetables are available, let a third dish be added. Let a good pound weight of bread suffice for the day, whether there be only one meal or both dinner and supper. If they are to have supper, the cellarer shall reserve a third of that pound, to be given them at supper.

But if it happens that the work was heavier, it shall lie within the Abbot's discretion and power, should it be expedient, to add something to the fare.

Above all things, however, over-indulgence must be avoided and a monk must never be overtaken by indigestion; for there is nothing so opposed to the Christian character as over-indulgence according to Our Lord's words, "See to it that your hearts be not burdened with over-indulgence" (Luke 21:34). Young boys shall not receive the same amount of food as their elders, but less; and frugality shall be observed in all circumstances. Except the sick who are very weak, let all abstain entirely from eating the flesh of four-footed animals.

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