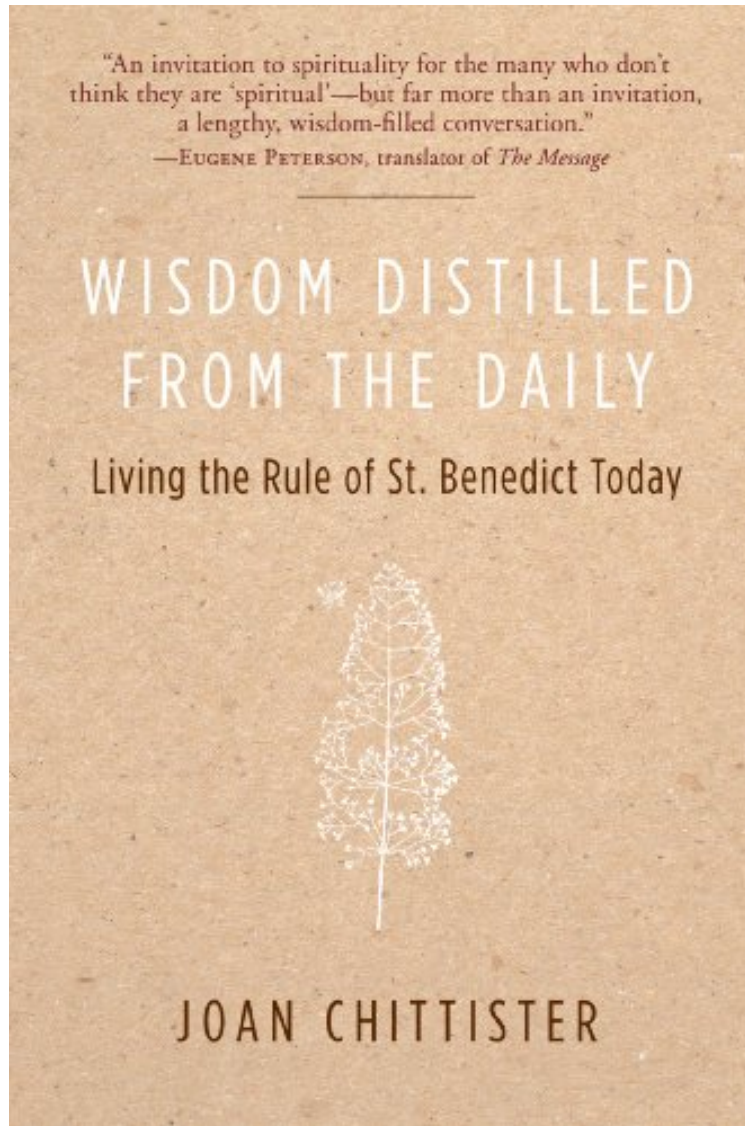


[Download free ebook] Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today

Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today

Von Joan Chittister

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Von Joan Chittister : Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Monkish InsightsVon joshua feldmethI. SynopsisChittister believes that the everyday life of every person contains wisdom,

truth, beauty, potential, and perhaps even God. But it's not her idea, at least originally. The Rule of St. Benedict, penned by a humble 4th century monk, has for centuries served as the corner-stone text and instruction manual for the Benedictine religious order, and now reemerges as the basis of Chittester's "Wisdom." In short, the Rule is a guide to Christian spirituality that at its roots emphasizes balance, community and a lifetime of personal conversion. It is simple in that it is for everyone, regardless of education and status. It is comprehensive in that it proposes a complete way of life. Finally, the Rule is realistic: it advances balance between work and leisure, promising only peace at the end of a life of trying yet not necessarily accomplishing. Chittester frames the highlights of the Rule in an effort to guide 20th century Christians in the ways of ancient monastics. She begins simply with the core skills of Benedictine living: listening, and prayer or lectio. Listening means living with ears attuned to the call of Christ (to Benedictines, this is represented in a Monastery bell), thus creating a spirituality sentient of the presence of God in our lives and also the presence of others. Prayer and lectio, the act of prayerful meditation on scripture, for the listening Christian then becomes the center of life. It is regular, universal, reflective, communal and converting (p. 29) thus cracking open the door and letting God enter daily life. In both disciplines, Chittester begins the introduction of the reader to two fundamental yet often counterintuitive concepts of Benedictine spirituality 1) individual growth out of community investment and 2) the tension of change through pause (the opposite of what U2 might call "running to stand still"). From here the discussion moves to the characteristics or virtues of Benedictine monasticism. These include humility, community, hospitality, wholeness, work, and holy leisure, and in each, Chittester suggests creative and often radically new definitions. Community is synonymous with love and personal development. Here love (i.e. the community) costs and it demands but without it, man is only half alive. She states profoundly, "Alone I am what I am, but in community, I am what I can become (p. 49)." Humility is a lost and misunderstood virtue. Contrary to common definition, the Rule says humility allows for people to be happy with what they do well, as long as they don't exalt themselves to positions of power over others. Here the difficulties of both historic Christianity (i.e. grandiose medieval Cathedrals) and the fine-lines of the balance within the Rule are addressed head on, yet not totally resolved. Discussions of harmony, wholeness, work, leisure follow and further underscore the Rule's notion of a balanced life that embraces the small, daily and often picayune opportunities to improve the world and the individual. Finally, hospitality and the importance of recognizing the gifts of individuals, and the need to "bloom where planted" (i.e. stability) are developed as Benedictine virtues. What has been conspicuously absent from this book up to this point are specific prescriptions, do's and don't's if you will, for Christian living. And it seems somewhat unnecessary, even paltry when Chittester finally devotes a later chapter to monastic practices. Although these practices are consistent with the bulk of the Rule, they do not hold a preeminent place in the text. Meaning, they are examples of what someone committed to the Rule on a daily basis would naturally evince, almost like a virtue ethic. Although this may be frustrating for 20th century readers who are accustomed to 12 step programs and bullet point memorandums, it is wholly in step with the Rule according to Chittester. The book ends with a final promise of peace. At the end of a life that never arrives but is always arriving, that struggles to grow and not conquer, peace comes to the enlightened and faithful.

II. Critique Chittester deals with the vague and nuanced notions of balance and tension in the Rule deftly. She uses approachable language and simple examples, both from her life in the monastery and from secular sources. She artfully structures the chapters in a way consistent with practical application: we are introduced to basic skills, then virtues and finally, big picture results. Moreover, she exhibits a good bit of humor and interesting writing, particularly in the use of ancient axioms, anecdotes and stories straight from the original Rule. Who could forget the John the Dwarf (p. 150), or a senior monk affronted by a withheld fig (p. 123) or the go-ahead-make-my-day monastic who wouldn't bat an eyelash at being "run through" by a big talking swordsman (p. 184). Where "Wisdom" perhaps falls short is in Chittester's (at times unconscious) use of a highly evolved sense of perception and spiritual connectedness. The reader feels somewhat left out as Chittester recalls how the stain glass windows in the monastery chapel "tear at her soul" or how a well-hung crucifix reminds her of so many cosmic reassurances. Truly, these are symbols of a faith and for the lifelong faithful they point to wealth of memories. Yet it is her success as a contemplative and cloistered nun that renders some of her ruminations too sophisticated for the laity.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Small Dose of the Daily Von Carol Bonomo Other authors in the Benedictine tradition use the same categorical approach to the Rule of St. Benedict as found here (see Tinsley, "PAX: the Benedictine Way; McQuiston, "Always We Begin Again"): listening, prayer, community, humility, work, obedience, and stability. Chittester incorporates selected examples from the earliest monastic desert traditions as well as modern-day examples from her own life in the cloister to illustrate these Benedictine basics. Unlike many authors on these subjects, Chittester adds an intensely political sensibility, which some readers may find helpful in their search for relevance in this ancient tradition. Others will find it jarring or even the antithesis of "pure" Benedictine spirituality. "We can stop nuclear war ourselves by stopping the manufacture of nuclear weapons", she writes in the chapter on prayer and lectio. "Humans created them and humans can destroy them." (p 35) Chittester does her best work and writing in her examples from her life and the deliciously eccentric stories from the desert abbas and ammas. Unfortunately, the bulk of the book has a vague preachiness that is easier to skim than to absorb, and her perchance for negative repetition as a literary device become annoying quickly. "The function of prayer is not magic. The function of prayer is not the bribery of the

Infinite. The function of prayer is not to change the mind of God..." (p 35) Other books in this category are more useful and less irritating in style. This one goes down quickly and, for the most part, won't hurt a thing. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Benedict Rules! Von Ein Kunde Joan Chittister has written a most beguiling and yet practical reflection on the ancient Rule of Benedict. This charming book, though nearly ten years old, is as fresh as the day it was written. "Wisdom Distilled from the Daily" is a timely and welcome guide for all who seek moments of grace and personal spiritual growth in and from their daily lives. Each of the fifteen short chapters is prefaced by a direct citation from the 1500 year old Rule of St. Benedict. Each begins with a description of some physical characteristic of the Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania, home of her religious community, to whom Chittister dedicates the book. The author uses each of these concrete realities from in daily life in her monastery as a root metaphor which she breaks open in flowing, nearly-musical prose to reveal the timeless wisdom of Benedict on such topics as Listening, Prayer, Work, Humility, and (my personal favorite) "Holy Leisure". But this is not a book about monasticism. St. Benedict was a layman. While his Rule has been adopted and used by monastic brothers and sisters of various religious orders since the sixth century, it was meant to be a spiritual guide for all -- particularly lay persons. More importantly, its purpose is to help us build our spirituality from the bricks and mortar of the lived experiences of our daily lives. The author reminds us that we can find sanctity in the world around us: "If we are not spiritual where we are and as we are, we are not spiritual at all". This book is a gem! It is an easy read. If you think highly enough of someone to want them to read it also, buy them a copy. Don't lend them yours. This one is a "keeper" you will want to refer to frequently. In "Wisdom Distilled from the Daily", Joan Chittister has remade the timeless sixth century Rule of St. Benedict into a much-needed Rule of Living for the twenty-first century.

Kurzbeschreibung Wise and enduring spiritual guidelines for everyday living as relevant today as when The Rule was originally conceived by St. Benedict in fifth century Rome. Kurzbeschreibung Wise and enduring spiritual guidelines for everyday living as relevant today as when The Rule was originally conceived by St. Benedict in fifth century Rome. ber den Autor und weitere Mitwirkende Joan Chittister is a member and former prioress of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie and currently the executive director of the Alliance for International Monasticism (AIM). She is the author of Psalm Journal, Winds of Change, and Woman Strength: Modern Church, Modern Women.