



Rule of Life-Fr. Branson Hipp

Daily Essentials:

1. Morning: Get up on time, avoid that snooze nonsense. Avoid internet browsing, checking e-mails, etc. Before getting up, you tend to waste time on it. Begin with a quick act of thanksgiving and dedication of the day.
2. Silence: Every day, silent holy hour. In front of tabernacle, or, occasionally, in the room or in the woods. You need this. Preferably in the morning. Figure out a time that works in parish. "Silence is our memory, filled with the awareness of belonging to Jesus."
-Massimo Camisasca
3. Prayer: Holy hour in the morning along with Office & MP. Make time for the rest of the hours throughout the day, Daytime prayer during Lunch hour, vespers before dinner, compline before going to bed. Do lectio. Pray with the text for the mass that day. Not necessarily to prepare the homily for that day, but to allow the HS to speak to you through the text. Use the actual physical breviary when you can, and keep your prayer intentions in there. Pray for your people every day, offering for them and earnestly supplicating. Make a daily act of mortification for them and for your own faithfulness.
4. Celebrate the mass reverently: make time beforehand for silence and prayer as much as you can (the people will want to talk to you, etc.). This is the heart of your day. Remember that. Remember all the times you were disappointed with a priest who rushed through, did not celebrate reverently, or did not seem interested in the Eucharist. This is Christ's saving work that you participate in, and meditate on every part of it.
5. Spiritual Reading: Every day before you go to bed. Every other book should be about a saint.
6. Marian devotion: She will help you. Rosary every day, while walking at night or in the car. If it isn't happening every day, need to switch the times that this happens.
7. Keep up with the news. Maybe in the morning. Just read a bit of what is going on, without allowing it to waste your time. "What happens in the world belongs to the history of the body of Christ." -Camisasca
8. Afternoons are tough: you will want to overeat, avoid work, and bum it. Don't. avoid your room if you have to. This is not about busy-ness, but faithfulness. If you need the nap, take it, but hesitate.
9. Use your calendar, and have it synced to your phone. Stay on this, otherwise you will over book yourself. Respond to your emails promptly if you can.
10. Examination of Conscience. A good one. Know your weaknesses. See end of rule.
11. Go for a walk if you can, just to have time to reflect and stretch your legs. Afternoons might be good for this.

12. Keep your laptop out of your room, no watching shows and movies at night. It keeps you awake and isn't good rest. Read fun books or spiritual reading before bed, not television. You won't look back on your life and wished you had watch more shows and movies.
13. End your day with gratitude and an amendment to do better. Live like a beggar before the Lord.
14. Get some sleep. You need it.

Weekly/Monthly Essentials:

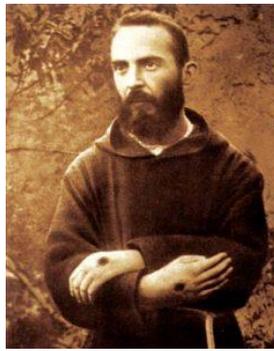
1. Confession: A priest that has not been forgiven will not have the desire to offer the experience of forgiveness to others. Weekly if you can, every other week if not.
2. Study: The priest who does not study will not have anything to say. Set aside some time each week, once you figure out your schedule for study. Doesn't have to be exorbitant, but you need this.
3. Charity: Give to it. Figure out once you have your finances set up how you want to do this.
4. Common life: Fraternity with your priestly brothers, esp. those near you and companions. Make a checklist if you need to to remember to call them and check on them. Include among this your seminarians as well. They look to you, believe it or not.
5. Exercise: At least 3x a week. You need this too. This is essential. Run or work out. but do it.
6. For day off, make sure it is leisurely without being a day of idleness. Spend time with your family, priest brothers, friends.
7. Prepare your Sunday homily well. Look at the following weekend homily on Monday, and mull it over and pray with it throughout the week.
8. Fast 1 day a week. Figure out the day that will work best for your particular parish.
9. Mentoring the young in the parish. Make time for this and ensure that you are doing it.
10. Spiritual Direction: Every 2 weeks if you can. At the very least once a month. Brutal honesty with SD.
11. Desert day: Go on a silent day once a month if you can. Just time with the Lord and opportunity to regroup. This is not selfishness, it is essential.
12. Make time to write thank you cards, you ungrateful cad. Schedule it in.
13. School of Community: Will help with your ministry, the time with these people. For whatever reason, they are essential to your vocation.

Yearly Essentials:

1. Retreats: Canonical/otherwise. Don't make excuses. Do it. And go somewhere that you can really pray and rest with the Lord. Face your ministry with integrity and honesty.
2. Vacation: Rest well and do it with others. Make time for people important to you.
3. Check up: w/ doctor, dentist, etc. Make sure you aren't dying.

Daily Examination:

Was I lazy today? Did I avoid risks out of fear and lack of trust in the Lord? Did I avoid my holy hour? Did I pray the LOTH with reverence and patience? Did I overeat? Did I waste time on television and the internet? Did I complain or gossip? Was I prudent in my relations with women? Was I patient, especially with those who irritate me? Was there work that I avoided? Did I seek attention in any way? Was I wasteful with my money? Did I think about the Lord at all or try to seek His presence throughout the day? Was I late and made others wait on me? In what did I find my rest? Was it the Lord or something else? Was I considerate to the brothers I am living with, helping to love them? Was I obedient?



St. Padre Pio's 5 Point Rule of Life

When we think of great mystics and wonder-working saints, we often think of those who lived centuries ago. Yet, St. Pio of Pietrelcina was both a mystic and a performer of many miracles—and he died in 1968, only 46 years ago.

In many ways, this saint was and is a contradiction to our scientific, rational age, and despite their eagerness to prove him a fraud, skeptics remain consistently unable to explain the many miracles that accompanied St. Pio's life.

But while St. Pio is remembered as a miracle worker, he was perhaps best known in his day as a spiritual father to countless souls. He gave wise and holy counsel to those dealing with the struggles of living a holy life in the world, and through his advice, he guided many souls to heaven.

Here are five habits St. Padre Pio believed all Catholics should practice, based on advice he gave to his spiritual children.

I. Weekly Confession

"Confession is the soul's bath. You must go at least once a week. I do not want souls to stay away from confession more than a week. Even a clean and unoccupied room gathers dust; return after a week and you will see that it needs dusting again!"

II. Daily Communion

"It is quite true; we are not worthy of such a gift. However, to approach the Blessed Sacrament in a state of mortal sin is one thing, and to be unworthy is quite another. All of us are unworthy, but it is He who invites us. It is He who desires it. Let us humble ourselves and receive Him with a heart contrite and full of love."

III. Examination of Conscience Every Evening

Someone once told Padre Pio that he thought a nightly examination of conscience was pointless because he knew what was sin as it was committed. To this, Padre Pio replied, "That is true enough. But every experienced merchant in this world not only keeps track throughout the day of whether he has lost or gained on each sale. In the evening, he does the bookkeeping for the day to determine what he should do on the morrow. It follows that it is indispensable to make a rigorous examination of conscience, brief but lucid, every night."

IV. Daily Spiritual Reading

“The harm that comes to souls from the lack of reading holy books makes me shudder.... What power spiritual reading has to lead to a change of course, and to make even worldly people enter into the way of perfection.”

V. Mental Prayer Twice Daily

“If you do not succeed in meditating well, do not give up doing your duty. If the distractions are numerous, do not be discouraged; do the meditation of patience, and you will still profit. Decide upon the length of your meditation, and do not leave your place before finishing, even if you have to be crucified. Why do you worry so much because you do not know how to meditate as you would like? Meditation is a means to attaining God, but it is not a goal in itself. Meditation aims at the love of God and neighbor. Love God with all your soul without reserve, and love your neighbor as yourself, and you will have accomplished half of your meditation.”

***The following 5-point rule was taken from the article, Saint Padre Pio, by Rev. Father Jean, OFM., Cap.



Cardinal Newman's Simple Rule of Life

The Simple Path

- 1. Do not lie in bed beyond the due time of rising;**
- 2. Give your first thoughts to God;**
- 3. Make a good visit to the Blessed Sacrament;**
- 4. Say the Angelus devoutly;**
- 5. Eat and drink to God's glory;**
- 6. Say the Rosary well;**
- 7. Be recollected; keep out bad thoughts;**
- 8. Make your evening meditation well;**
- 9. Examine yourself daily;**
- 10. Go to bed in good time, and you are already perfect.**

Background information on his rule:

Saint John Henry Newman was a Cardinal of the Catholic Church and one of the most famous English converts to the faith. While he was a distinguished man of letters, an erudite apologist, and an accomplished prelate, he was known most of all for his holiness of life, the result of which has been his recent beatification.

Cardinal Newman was a scholar well acquainted with the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and yet he also knew the holiness was not a matter of great learning or academic study. Holiness is available to all—even an illiterate peasant.

The Simple Path

But how is one to be holy? In his work, *Meditations and Devotions*, the holy Cardinal outlines a simple path to holiness. Here it is.

It is the saying of holy men that, if we wish to be perfect, we have nothing more to do than to perform the ordinary duties of the day well. A short road to perfection-short, not because easy, but because pertinent and intelligible. There are no short ways to perfection, but there are sure ones.

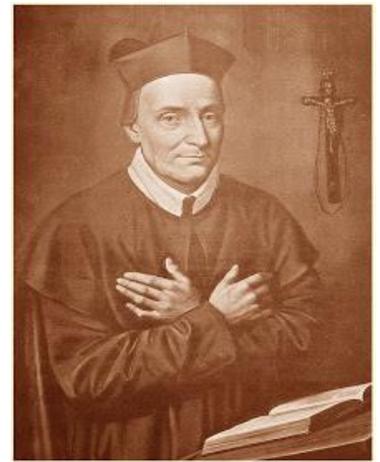
I think this is an instruction which may be of great practical use to persons like ourselves. It is easy to have vague ideas what perfection is, which serve well enough to talk about, when we do not intend to aim at it; but as soon as a person really desires and sets about seeking it himself, he is dissatisfied with anything but what is tangible and clear, and constitutes some sort of direction towards the practice of it.

We must bear in mind what is meant by perfection. It does not mean any extraordinary service, anything out of the way, or especially heroic-not all have the opportunity of heroic acts, of sufferings-but it means what the word perfection ordinarily means. By perfect we mean that which has no flaw in it, that which is complete, that which is consistent, that which is sound-we mean the opposite to imperfect. As we know well what imperfection in religious service means, we know by the contrast what is meant by perfection.

He, then, is perfect who does the work of the day perfectly, and we need not go beyond this to seek for perfection. You need not go out of the round of the day.

I insist on this because I think it will simplify our views, and fix our exertions on a definite aim.

A Rule of Life For Those Who, Living in the World, Aspire after Perfection



The Servant of God Fr Giovanni Mazzini, C.S.S.R.

In the Morning

1. Rise at affixed hour, for example, six o'clock; do not remain longer in bed without a reasonable motive.
2. As soon as you awake, offer your heart to God, make the sign of the Cross, and dress yourself quickly and modestly. Then, on your knees, say three "Hail Marys," in honor of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to obtain a great purity of body and soul.
3. Say your morning prayers, and make a meditation during half, or at least a quarter of an hour. It is better to say short prayers - "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," - or to say your prayers going to or at your work, than to say no prayers at all.
4. Hear Mass, if it is possible.

During the Course of the Day

5. Read a spiritual book for at least a quarter of an hour.
6. Say your beads, if possible, with the rest of the household.
7. Pay a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the church if you can do so. N.B. - For these three last exercises you can choose whatever time will least interfere with your daily occupations.
8. Frequently make short ejaculatory prayers, above all at the beginning and end of your actions. Employ chiefly acts of the love of God, such as these: My dear Jesus, I love Thee ... I wish very much to love Thee ... make me love Thee more and more, etc.
9. Practice the mortification of the eyes, of the ears, and of the tongue, by sometimes refraining from looking, hearing, or saying things, which, though not dangerous, are useless, in order to be able more easily to abstain from what is dangerous, or even bad.
10. Seize carefully every opportunity of suffering any little pain, contradiction, or humiliation, for the love of God. In every such occasion submit yourself to the will of God, saying: O my God, this is Thy Will; may Thy holy Will be done!
11. At your meals deprive yourself in part or entirely of some little thing you are fond of; and never completely satisfy your appetite.
12. Do not eat between meals without necessity.
13. Fly idleness, bad company, and every occasion of sin, especially those in which chastity is in danger.
14. In temptations, especially those of impurity, make the sign of the Cross, if you are alone; and say in your heart, Jesus and Mary, help me. If the temptation still continues, do not be troubled, but pray with greater earnestness, saying, My dear Jesus, I would rather die than offend Thee.

15. If you have the misfortune to commit a sin, so not give way to trouble, even though the sin be grievous, but make immediately a good act of contrition, with a firm purpose not to fall again, and to confess it as soon as possible.

In the Evening

16. At a fixed hour, for example, nine o'clock, say your night prayers, and make your examination of conscience; recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and then read over the subject of the next morning's meditation.

17. Having said, on your knees, the three "Hail Marys," as in the morning, undress yourself with all modesty, and be careful to remain always decently covered in bed, and to preserve a modest posture.

18. Until you fall asleep, occupy your mind with the subject of the **tomorrow's** meditation, or with the remembrance of death, or some other pious thought.

19. Choose a good [Traditional] Confessor, in whom you have confidence; open your heart to him without reserve, and be guided by his advice; do not quit him without strong reason.

20. Go to confession once a week, and receive the Holy Communion as often as your director judges proper. (Note: This was before Pope St. Pius X's decree encouraging frequent and daily communion.)

21. Attend sermons and instructions as often as you can, endeavoring always to apply them to yourself, and to draw some practical resolution from them; enter some pious confraternity, with the sole view of attending to the interest of your soul.

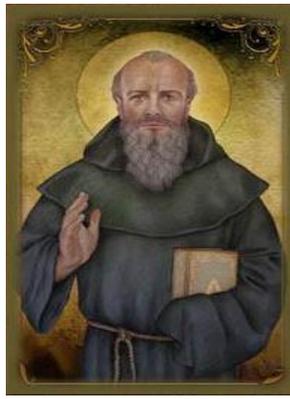
22. If your health will permit, fast on every Saturday, and on the eves of the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin. At least perform in Her honor some little act of mortification on those days, according to your state of health and your occupations. Nourish in your heart a tender devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, and address to Her from time to time this fervent prayer: My

good Mother Mary, help me to love your divine Son Jesus with all my heart. Wear the scapular, and at least the miraculous medal.

Observation

As this rule of life does not of itself impose any obligation under pain of sin, no one must be alarmed if he cannot follow it in everything. Let each one take that which is in accordance with the duties of his state of life, which ought always to be attended to in preference to any exercises of piety which are not of obligation. Thus let each one do what he can, but cheerfully, and for the love of God.

*Taken from A Familiar Explanation of Christian Doctrine, 1875
(out-of-print), by Father Michael Muller, C.Ss.R.*



The Rule of St. Columba

1. Participate in the Christian Community

Being a member of the Church means being a member of the Church, even if you are an isolated hermit. There is no such thing as an “independent Christian.” We aren’t meant to live the Christian life on our own.

St. Columba’s Rule instructs hermits to live “in the vicinity of a great city.” Some translate “great city” as “the seat of a bishop.” In other words, even when spending most of your time in isolation you need to remain firmly planted in the Church.

This Rule also instructs the hermit to “have a few devout men who will discuss God and the scriptures with you. Let them visit you on great feast-days, that so they may strengthen your devotion to the words and precepts of God.”

We need to be supported by good Christian fellowship. We ought to associate with those farther along the spiritual path than we are, to help show us the way. Note that the Rule mentions feast-days. The liturgical calendar of the Church should play a prominent role in our devotional life.

Many Christians may live out in the world and yet be spiritual hermits when it comes to the Church, isolating themselves from much of parish life. We should not only attend Sunday Mass, which is the principle celebration of the Christian community, but we should be participating in the community in other ways. Attend Mass on feast days during the week. Participate in public devotions, adult education, or social activities at your parish. Start a Bible study. Make good Christian friends. Have a spiritual director.

If even a hermit cannot walk the path of discipleship alone, what makes you think you can?

2. Be Detached from the World

Detachment is a good spiritual practice no matter your station in life. St. Columba calls his hermits to “let your life be completely detached from the world, and follow the teaching of Christ and the gospels.” This does not mean having no possessions whatsoever. The Rule also instructs, “Whether you possess much or little in the way of food, drink or clothing, let it be retained with the permission of a senior. Let him have control over its disposition...”

Whatever we may possess, it is important not to allow it to possess us. For those of us not in a religious order, placing control of our goods in the hands of a superior is not an option. But we can place their control in the hands of God. After all, God owns it all; we only borrow it for a time. This is what it means to be stewards of God’s creation. We are caretakers only. Nothing really belongs to us.

Note, too, the specific goods the Rule mentions: food, drink and clothing. There is not much in the way of luxury here. Because there is a tendency to put too much value in our possessions, we should strive to possess only that which we truly need.

3. Make Good Friends

In addition to the above requirement to have devout people with whom you can discuss God and the scriptures, St. Columba's Rule also warns against conversing "with anyone who is given to idle or worldly gossip, or with anyone who grumbles about what he can neither prevent nor rectify." The Rule calls for the hermit to bless such people, and then send them on their way.

We should be discerning in our friendships and associates. We should surround ourselves with those who will support us in our quest for sanctity and avoid those who will bring us down. Note: we should not treat the latter unkindly. We should pray for them, but cannot allow them to involve us in their vice.

4. Pray for Others

It goes without saying that the Christian disciple needs to have a robust daily prayer life. St. Columba's Rule says to "cherish every practice of devotion greatly." It specifically mentions praying for two groups of people:

Those who annoy you.

The dead.

Concerning the dead, the Rule instructs to pray for them constantly, "as if each dead person were a personal friend of yours." We should pray for the dead in our family and communities on a daily basis. As my own spiritual director puts it, each soul we pray for in purgatory becomes a sure friend and advocate for us in heaven. Who doesn't want more heavenly friends?

5. Be Faithful

The Rule instructs the hermits to "Be faithful to the commands of God at all times." A footnote mentions that "commands" could also be translated as "testament," which connotes bearing witness. Another way of putting this is martyrdom. St. Columba's Rule mentions two types. It says, "Be ready in mind for red martyrdom," the martyrdom of blood. But it also says, "Be preserving and steadfast for white martyrdom."

This "white martyrdom" means abandoning everything for the sake of Christ. It means living a totally faithful Christian life, despite whatever hardships or obstacles the world throws at us; despite whatever derision or scorn it might bring. Hermits and monastics live this white martyrdom in a very specific way, of course. But there is no reason whatsoever that a lay person cannot live this same spirit in his or her home out in the world.

6. Do Penance

St. Columba's Rule instructs, "Let your vigils be constant day by day, but always under the direction of another." A footnote here indicates that "vigils" refers to *cros figell* or "cross vigil," a penitential form of prayer where the hermit would pray standing with his arms outstretched as if on a cross for long periods of time.

Penance ought to be a part of every Christian's spiritual practices. Note that the Rule instructs this penance to be performed "under the direction of another." This is as a caution against going

overboard in our penance. As Christians, we believe penance is good, holy and necessary. But we are not masochists.

We today ought to follow the Church's guidelines on penance; keep the fasting days, perform some penance on Fridays of the year, and make frequent use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Don't take on too many personal penances without spiritual direction.

7. Forgive Others

The Rule instructs hermits to "forgive every person from your heart." No further explanation is necessary. No adaptation for the modern life required. Forgive others. Period.

8. Pray, Work, Read

The Rule mentions three activities that make up the hermit's daily occupation: prayer, manual labor, and lectio or "holy reading." These are good daily endeavors for all of us. Obviously the particular work of a hermit or monk will be different than that of a layman in the world. But the principle still applies. We ought to spend some time each day in prayer, spiritual reading, and productive work. Remembering all three ensures one endeavor doesn't dominate the others. Each is important.

9. Work Smart

Concerning daily work, the Rule specifies a three-fold division. First you should work to "fill your own needs and those of the place where you live." Second you should "do your share of your brothers' work." Third, you should "help your neighbors." Work for yourself and then for your community.

As Christians, we are reminded often of the need to serve others—and this is very true. But we also need to care for ourselves. We cannot, after all, serve others effectively if our own needs are not met. It is like the safety instructions given by flight attendants reminding us to put on our own oxygen mask before assisting others. We can't very well help anyone if we pass out.

This advice readily applies to the married life. I need to fulfill my own daily needs, then the needs of my household & family. Only then can I adequately address the needs of my larger community.

10. Practice Moderation

The Rule contains a set of short precepts reminding the hermit to be moderate in all things. "Do not eat until you are hungry. Do not sleep until it is necessary. Do not speak until necessity demands."

If we only eat when we are hungry, we avoid the sin of gluttony. If we only sleep when we are tired, we avoid the sin of sloth. If we only speak when we have something meaningful and necessary to say, we avoid the sin of gossip, calumny, detraction, and so many others. This is good advice for all of us to bear in mind.

11. Be Generous

Living moderately allows us to be more generous to others. The Rule reminds us that if we take less than our allowance of food and clothing, we will have more to share with the poor. It says, "Above and before all else practice almsgiving." Again, this is good spiritual advice for all.

12. Be Zealous

The Benedictine focus on *ora et labora*, work and prayer, is a constant of every Rule of Life. The Rule of St. Columba instructs us to be particularly zealous in both of these areas. “The extent of your prayer should be until tears come,” and, “The measure of your work should be to labor until tears of exhaustion come.”

If you think praying and working until you cry sounds like a bit much, I would agree. Especially when you consider that tears come more freely to some than to others. However, the Rule holds this up as an ideal to strive for rather than an absolute requirement. Recognizing that this won't be possible or practical to many, the Rule also states that if tears do not come, the limit of our prayer and work “should be perspiration.”

In other words, we shouldn't be lazy in either our prayer or labor. We should engage in both until we are tired. But we shouldn't force ourselves beyond exhaustion. We should be zealous, but not unreasonable, in our efforts.

13. Remember the Basics

Finally, St. Columba's Rule instructs us to “Love God with all your heart and with all your strength” and to “love your neighbor as you would yourself.” These are the two great commandments given to us by Christ (Mt 22:37). Jesus said that all the Law and Prophets depend on these two commandments (Mt 22:40). And so any Rule of Life we adopt for ourselves must also depend on these basic tenets of the Christian faith.

Teresa of Ávila Rule



"To live a life in allegiance to Jesus Christ - how, pure in heart and stout in conscience, he must be unswerving in the service of the Master". To live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Carmelites bind themselves especially to:

1. Develop the contemplative dimension of their life, in an open dialogue with God
2. Live as brothers, full of charity (love)
3. Meditate day and night on the Word of the Lord
4. Pray together or alone several times a day
5. Celebrate the Eucharist every day
6. Do manual work, as Paul the Apostle did
7. Purify themselves of every trace of evil
8. Live in poverty, placing in common what little they may have
9. Love the Church and all people
10. Conform their will to that of God, seeking the will of God in faith, in dialogue and through discernment.