

RULE OF LIFE CONFERENCE: April 28th, 2010

As Episcopalians, we are considered “people of the Book (BCP)”

As *Benedictines*, we are, also, “people of the Rule – the RB”

A rule of life helps us stay focused on God, bringing perspective to our life w/God ... instead of being distracted by the trivial things of life

Use of a rule:

- helps us to become more spiritually alive
- fosters holiness in common daily life, rather than just occasional spiritual nourishment (think Sunday only)

Want to touch on 3 major themes:

- Benedictine spirituality vis-à-vis a rule of life
- Myers-Briggs related to rule of life
- “mini rule of life” described by Curt Almquist (Superior, SSJE)

Benedictine spirituality vis-à-vis a rule of life

Benedictine spirituality – offers way of *life* & attitude of the *mind* – of living abundant life in each of our multiple communities

& how do we do that? Joan Chittister says by reading RB & imagining its potential for everyone everywhere - & esp. for groups like ours

Reading the RB is invitation to develop our own Rule

Just as the RB deals w/21st century issues of stewardship, relationships, authority, balance, work, simplicity, prayer, ...

So, our individual rules of life can be reflecting some of these issues, too

Our Rules should reflect our daily life – lived in Christ, & lived well

It is to be *our* way of spiritual development

How do *you* answer these kinds of Q's:

- do I walk thru creation “whole & holy”?
- do I walk *with* God & *for* God as much as possible in my life?
- Do I love enough?
- Do I have a relationship with God that I am satisfied with?
- Do I find that I prefer God to all else? How can I reorient my priorities?

Are any of these objectives for your rule?

If you haven't prepared your rule yet, or want to update yours – you might consider any of those objectives as additions to your own rule

Has your Rule enhanced your spiritual development, or do you never look at it? Is it outdated for this stage of your life?

Just before summer is a good time to review it & update it, if it doesn't seem to fit anymore

Questions:

- on relating your rule to the RB?
- On objectives for your rule & how they guide development of a rule?

Suggestions:

- start with objective(s)
- given your objective(s), how can they be accomplished thru worship, study, work, service, stewardship, & other categories of Benedictine spirituality?
- Write down specific practices to accomplish each objective

Myers-Briggs & a Rule of Life

Following a rule helps us to practice “living well”, consistent with our own personality

Wanted to touch on M-B & how it might relate to your rule

Think about your own Myers-Briggs personality style

We find that we can incorporate what we know about our M-B personality style into developing our individual Rule

Examples of M-B usage in your rule (think about your own 4-letter style):

- NF's
 - .. prayer component of rule might be more free flowing than SJ's
 - .. might find contemplative prayer to your liking
 - .. may want to tie your rule to intimacy with God
 - .. your quest for the sacred should be reflected
 - .. may not want to make your rule too detailed
- NT's
 - .. study might be a big component; attendance at lectures, etc. enhancing your faith development
 - .. look for the new ideas that you generate to lead to new understandings of faith & your relationship with God
 - .. prayer might be contemplative, if perceptive; Daily Office, if judging

- .. find opportunities to have intimacy with God
- .. outreach might help to understand feelings of others
- SJ's
 - .. expect your rule to be orderly & detailed
 - .. Daily Office may be important component
 - .. may want to build in new ways to pray (to keep from getting into rut)
- SP's
 - .. expect outreach to be big component
 - .. may want balance in excitement & risk-taking needs
 - .. balance freedom with obedience & responsibility

Some general M-B comments:

- if you are a *thinker*, then your rule should feed desire for spiritual growth
- if a *feeler*, could look for ways to build opportunities for using your compassion (thru outreach, hospitality, etc.?)
- if an *introvert*, might build ways to balance (key word) silence & community/people into your rule; (you like being alone, but) outreach could be an important component
- if an *extrovert*, look for ways to build some quiet time (with God) into your days thru your rule (even tho external world stimulates you) → balance is important

We can find healthy balance in our lives thru living RB with our M-B knowledge

For those of you who may not be comfortable w/your Rule yet, or for those who had trouble developing their rule from the general process that was given – have you tried Curt Almquist's idea of a “mini-rule”?

Discussion re “mini rule of life” (Curt Alquist, SSJE)

Read

Notice how Curt organizes his mini-rule: objectives, values/virtues, practices (much like what was recommended in our group a year ago)

Questions:

- Does this type of mini-rule appeal to you? Why/why not?
- What are its benefits relative to other types of rule?
- Any other comments re mini-rule?

General:

1) As you think re your life, what is most important work that you do - is it a real priority in your life, or are you fitting it in among tasks that are less important but noisier in their demands?

2) How can your Rule help to keep your life in balance?

Sue Eastes