



LIFE IS WORTH PRACTICING

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The English word "practice" comes from the ancient Greek, praxis: an action to reach a goal. Praxis has always been an informing principle of monasticism.

- to order each day in a way consistent with our life's end: to know God, love God, and serve God with every breath.
- to treat each moment, each encounter, each task as sacred.

To practice living well, monks traditionally live under a rule of life, the word "rule" coming from the Latin, *regula*, a principle or measurement governing conduct. A rule of life is descriptive, i.e., this is how we practice living. A rule of life is also prescriptive, i.e., when we miss the mark, this helps us find our way again.

The thought of your living under a rule of life may make you groan. (Yikes: one more thing you're not going to get done....) And yet, the principle behind this practice may put a lilt to your gait and a smile in your heart. It's a way to lean into the gift of life, engaging each passing moment as God's invitation for you to live abundantly, not passively or resentfully or inattentively.

Here's a simple, profound practice, a mini rule of life.

- Take some time to ponder and pray about five words which mean the world to you, which have preeminent value. Some possibilities: generosity, thankfulness, love, hope, kindness, forgiveness, gentleness, reconciliation, courage, patience, prayer, mindfulness, redemption, perseverance.... There are no "right" words, only your five words.
- List them on an index card, and beside each word, name a practice you will engage each day, at least once, consistent with this principle. Then begin each day with a prayer, acknowledging that God has invited you into a new day.
- Practice your day with intention. At the end of the day, compare notes with God about how your day went. Life is worth practicing!