

12. WORLDLY THINGS

1. "All things were made by him;
and without him was not
anything made
that was made."
The sun, moon, and stars,
and all the elements within,
were made by the Word,
out of love for God's creation.
From these gifts, mankind's creativity has
discovered and invented
wonderous things.

2. But their spiritual growth suffered
under the weight of their inventiveness.
The efficiencies and luxuries of life
captured the hearts of the privileged,
creating inequity in economics,
politics, social structures,
and the use of nature's bounty.
The love of money, power, and prestige
infected the human mind,
creating false gods
and growing scales of illusion
over the eyes that lit the soul.
"You shall worship the Lord your God,
and Him only shall you serve."

3. Our challenge is to lay up treasures
for ourselves in the vault of heaven.
These are harder to see,
harder to believe in,
and cannot be gathered directly.
They come to our account
through the imitation of Christ –
by bearing his Word
in the presence of love
each moment in time.
They appear where our heart is,
and they can't be the product of expectation –
for true love has no expectations.

4. A true heart seeks
a right attitude and approach
to worldly things.
Without renouncing the gifts of God
for the things we ourselves need,
we use what we have been given
in the service of others,
seeking dignity, respect and equity
for all persons.
And we receive gratefully
those things we are in need of,
offering thankfulness for these gifts.

A Common Rule for Monastics

5. Know well the lesson
of the vineyard workers:
In God's eyes, all people deserve
the minimum needed to live decently;
not based on merit,
or connections,
or talent, or opportunities,
or ethnicity –
but because they are children of God.
If we have more than we need,
we watch for opportunities
to share the excess
with those truly in need.

6. We endeavor to replenish
what we receive from the earth,
being ever mindful
of the earth's limited resources.
We endeavor to distinguish
between a need and a want,
knowing that our minds will sometimes
confuse the two.
We endeavor to emotionally detach
from all worldly things,
because it is impossible
to serve two masters.

7. Luke writes, "Take heed
and beware of covetousness –
for a person's life does not consist
in the abundance of things possessed."
We are not nourished
by the things of this world,
but by every word
that is uttered or written
from the mouth of God.

8. We walk carefully
as sheep among wolves
when we interact with the rich or powerful
who are blinded by various delusions.
We gird ourselves with love and patience,
and strengthen our resolve,
knowing that the Holy Advocate
will guide us unto a path of peace
while we persist in a quest
to live the Gospel
through the prayer, study and service
of our vocations.

"Seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness,
and all these things will be added unto you."