

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this Common Rule grew out of the realization that, over time, too many of us have become human *doings*, and have forgotten that we are actually supposed to be human *beings*.

We live in a “doing” society today that moves much too fast, has too many things, and fails to connect deeply with each other – all of which erodes our moral foundation and the sense of who we really are as a people. We seem lost, but are too busy to realize it, or even care about it. We fill the voids within our souls with things and activities which provide us the alibis we need to avoid a face-to-face encounter with our own hearts. The busy life has become our habit, our excuse to escape the encounter we need to really live.

So, from within our monastic community, we pause for a while and re-examine *what it means to be a human being at the most basic levels*. What are the roots that tie us to life and living? What can provide the basis for knowing ourselves and understanding how we fit into this world, without succumbing to its illusion? What gives us the strength and bearing to be who we are truly made to be, thereby fulfilling the deep-seated desire in each of us to reach our full potential?

The pieces of this puzzle are scattered over the pages of time, written in many places throughout the world. They appear again and again, however, like a perennial flower in the gardens of both the East and

West. They are the voices of prophets, sages, and mystics, beckoning us to join in the cosmic dance of love; an invitation that never ends, like love itself. “Come! Follow me!” Where else can we go for the truth but to the truth-givers?

The pages of this document emerge as an invitation – a call to first understand who we are as human *beings*, and then to extend that knowledge out into the world in our own unique ways, serving as models of what life could be. The offering is a life of seeing deeply, living deeply, and loving deeply – a life that values relationships more than things, and ensures the dignity and respect of *all* persons, helping each other discover the wonders of life.

While this booklet is designed for the members of the Community of the Gospel, it can also be used by anyone seeking a foundation for a loving, spiritually-based life. Perhaps it can contribute to the much-needed stability and sense of “being” in this fast-paced, hectic world that sometimes seems a little crazy.

Take the words of this Rule and discover what they mean for you. Be in the world but know where your roots grow best – in the loving Presence of your Creator as found in many places, including the far corners of your heart.

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