

A Rule of Life for Missionaries

Introduction

“But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” – Rom 6:8-11

Holiness. We have been created for communion with God. Our ultimate end is to return to the eternal embrace of our creator. This is an unmerited destiny that has only been made possible in the person of Jesus Christ, through whom we have been adopted as children of God. Our inheritance has already been won for us, but we are free to accept or reject it. We can choose to live in the truth of our identity as a son of God, or we can discard our divine sonship. Our daily choices bring us towards or away from a deeper intimacy with God. It is in the pursuit of holiness that we seek to be conformed to the image of Christ, to love as he loved us, and to unite our will to the Father’s. Indeed, as St. Therese of Lisieux stated, “Holiness consists simply in doing God’s will, and being just what God wants us to be”. The Lord will always give us sufficient grace for this task, which is ultimately a path of surrender. The intent of this rule of life is to assist us on this journey – to grow in holiness as a community of brothers.

What is a rule of life? A rule of life is a set of guidelines agreed upon by a community to support a more intentional way of living. This rule provides guiding principles for living virtuously as a member of a community of missionaries at the Baltimore Basilica.

How can a rule of life facilitate growth in holiness? There is a big difference between having good intentions and committing to live intentionally. As humans, we are continually tempted to fall into a comfortable lifestyle that limits our potential and ultimately stifles the life of Christ in us. Our sins reveal a lack of trust in the Father’s goodness and distort our perception of reality. We must reorient ourselves towards God daily; it is in our best interest to hold one another accountable through an explicit commitment to grow in holiness. A rule of life gives our community a sense of direction through which we encourage one another to live virtuously.

Only a fool would expect a plot of land to transform from a weedy lot to a lush garden by itself. Gardening is not a spontaneous process; it requires hard work, including pulling weeds, preparing the soil, planting seeds, and fighting off pests. And all of this must take place at its proper time. There simply aren’t any shortcuts. Similarly, we would be foolish to expect our community to flourish without the daily work of pulling up weeds and planting seeds. The rule of life gives us a practical vision to accomplish this work. By establishing a rhythm of gardening in our spiritual, emotional, and relational lives, we will find ourselves more inclined to follow the will of God each day. Far from being a hindrance to our freedom, this rule is meant to cultivate an environment in which the seeds of love can bear fruit.

Prayer

“Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.” – Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Christ in all. Prayer is to be the very heart of the missionaries’ way of life; nothing should be allowed to extinguish the spirit of devotion to our heavenly Father. As the source of Christian vocation, prayer empowers us to grow into perfect charity. Without an ever-deepening commitment to personal and communal prayer, we risk removing ourselves from Christ, apart from whom we can do nothing (Jn 15:5). Prayer must never take a backseat to other aspects of missionary life; rather, it should be a primary focus, fueling all of our actions, including our fraternal life and the apostolate. In fact, we should strive to engage each moment in a spirit of prayer, thus fulfilling the exhortation to “pray always” (1 Thess 5:17). Prayer opens the eyes of the missionary to see Christ in all people, in all things, in all places.

“Christ is all, and in all.” – Col 3:11

Thirst. Ultimately, prayer is a relationship. It is the result of an encounter with a real and living God who desires intimate dialogue with us. The Catechism describes this reality:

“The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him... Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God.” – CCC 2560-2561

The missionary should pray to discover this thirst of God, which is not simply a yearning for humanity, but a deep aching for communion with every individual. We must come to believe, despite all feelings and circumstances, that *God thirsts FOR ME*. It is when we have encountered this love on a personal and intimate level that we can proclaim the truth of God’s love to others. We will bear witness to this light through our lives. And we will see all whom we serve, from the destitute addict to the struggling mother to the jaded businessman, as infinitely beloved children of God. St. Teresa of Calcutta provides a poignant reflection for our own missionary life:

“I worry some of you still have not really met Jesus—one to one—you and Jesus alone. We may spend time in chapel—but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how He looks at you with love? Do you really know the living Jesus—not from books but from being with Him in your heart? Have you heard the loving words He speaks to you? Ask for the grace, He is longing to give it. Until you can hear Jesus in the silence of your own heart, you will not be able to hear Him saying “I thirst” in the hearts of the poor. Never give up this daily intimate contact with Jesus as the real living person—not just the idea.

Our soul needs that as much as the body needs to breathe the air. If not, prayer is dead—meditation-only thinking. Jesus wants you each to hear Him—speaking in the silence of your heart. Be careful of all that can block that personal contact with the living Jesus. The devil may try to use the hurts of life, and sometimes our own mistakes—to make you feel it is impossible that Jesus really loves you, is really cleaving to you. This is a danger for all of us. And so sad, because it is completely opposite of what Jesus is really wanting, waiting to tell you. Not only that He loves you, but even more—He longs for you. He misses you when you don't come close. He thirsts for you. He loves you always, even when you don't feel worthy. When not accepted by others, even by yourself sometimes—He is the one who always accepts you. My children, you don't have to be different for Jesus to love you.

Jesus himself must be the one to say to you "I Thirst." Hear your own name. Not just once. Every day. If you listen with your heart, you will hear, you will understand... Our Lady will help all of us in this, since she was the first person to hear Jesus's cry I Thirst with St. John, and I am sure Mary Magdalene. Because she was there on Calvary, she knew how real, how deep His longing for you and for the poor... Her role is to bring you face to face, as John and Magdalene, with the love in the Heart of Jesus crucified."

Sacramental life. The love of God is encountered most tangibly in the sacraments, and frequent reception of the sacraments allows the missionary to remain in Christ's love (Jn 15:9). Participation in the life of the Church is the lifeline which keeps us rooted to Christ amidst the distractions and turmoil of the world. For this reason, missionaries attend Mass daily. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life; in fact, the Eucharist is Christ himself, who is the source of all hope. Christ assures of this reality, saying:

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world... Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him." – Jn 6:51-56

In addition to the Mass, the missionary should seek to attend confession once a week. Confession is what prepares the soul to receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Scripture says that even a just man sins seven times a day. There is continual need to sweep the soul clean. The man who goes to confession regularly knows the mercy of God. And once he knows the mercy of God, he is able to extend that mercy to others—no matter how rough their appearance.

Eucharistic Adoration. It is only in spending time with someone that we learn to fall in love with them. This is the purpose of Eucharistic Adoration, as St. Alphonsus de Liguori said:

"Good friends find pleasure in one another's company. Let us know pleasure in the company of our best Friend, a Friend who can do everything for us, a Friend who loves us beyond measure. Here in the Blessed Sacrament we can talk to him straight from the heart."

Each day, missionaries must spend one hour praying before the Blessed Sacrament. It is here that the missionary talks to his best Friend, and learns to listen with the ears of his soul. It is only in the silence that one can hear the voice of divinity. When in His Presence, Jesus Christ speaks to us in the devout

reading of Sacred Scripture—most especially in the four Gospels. Jesus Christ speaks to us in the peace that comes with prayer and adoration. Jesus Christ speaks to us in the inspirations and personal resolutions that come in Adoration.

But the time of Adoration is not just for the missionary, it is also for the people whom he serves. The Holy Hour is the time in which the missionary brings the needs of the homeless, the addict, the parishioner, the stranger, the priest, the bishop, the woman contemplating an abortion, and even the professed enemy of Christianity to the Lord. This is the intimate time of personal encounter between the God of the Universe and the missionary, who faithfully intercedes on behalf of all those whom he serves.

“When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now.” – St. Teresa of Calcutta

Daily prayer. A daily rhythm of prayer provides life-giving soil for God’s love to take root in us. As missionaries, we seek to commune with God in a consistent and intentional manner. A haphazard approach to prayer is not enough to sustain our way of life; consistent dialogue with the Lord is necessary for the flourishing of any true vocation. Consequently, this rule seeks to lay out a pattern of daily prayer that fosters intimacy to Christ.

“Prayer in common, which has always been considered the foundation of all community life, starts from contemplation of God’s great and sublime mystery, from wonder for his presence, which is at work in the most significant moments of the life or our religious families as well as in the humble and ordinary realities of our communities.” – Fraternal Life in Community, released by the Vatican

At the start of the day, missionaries gather to say Morning Prayer (Lauds). At the end of the day, we gather to pray communal Night Prayer (Compline). The timing should be agreed upon communally, but it can be modified to accommodate for varying schedules. The missionary is also encouraged to foster his own routine of morning and night prayers, such as the Examen or the Morning Offering.

“If you are not a man of prayer, I don’t believe in the sincerity of your intentions when you say that you work for Christ.” – Saint Josemaría Escrivá

The Rosary. Jesus Christ chose to save the world by going through Mary! When a man prays the Rosary, he is mimicking Christ by going through Mary to save the world. During the recitation of the Rosary, the missionary meditates on the mysteries of Christ with Mary sitting right there—just as she did as the Apostles sat in the Upper Room on Pentecost Sunday. At that time, she was silently praying for them—as the Holy Spirit was empowering them for mission. When the missionary prays the Rosary, the same thing happens—and not in some diluted form. She sits with you praying for you just as she prayed for the Apostles. And she is praying for your mission. After all, your mission is the same as Christ’s—salvation. Every day, the missionary should meditate on at least five decades of the Rosary. The timing of this prayer is at the individual’s discretion. When the missionary prays the Rosary, he is not only asking for a specific fruit and virtue for himself, but for all those whom he has

already encountered and for all those God will have him encounter. He is also praying for the Mary to lead him in all aspects of the apostolate.

“Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother. Love the Madonna and pray the Rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today. All graces given by God pass through the Blessed Mother.” – St. Padre Pio

Fasts and Feasts. Missionaries are expected to observe the traditional fasts of the Catholic Church, including abstinence from meat on Fridays or the substitution of another penitential/charitable practice. During Lent and Advent, the community is encouraged to communally undertake an additional penitential/charitable observance. This should not be a heavy-handed mortification, but an attainable exercise agreed upon unanimously.

Furthermore, solemnities and feast days are to be occasions of celebration. The community is encouraged to rejoice through practices such as lightening the workload, preparing a festive meal, celebrating with the parish community, or finding time for holy leisure. In particular, the Sabbath is to be honored as a day of rest and gratitude, in which unnecessary work is avoided until at least the evening hours.

Monthly desert day. Each month the missionaries will spend at least one day outside the city to have silence and spiritual renewal. This day will be agreed upon with Fr. James. It is important that this day be a day free from electronics, social media, laptops and cell phones. It is a day to rest in the Lord and spiritual recharge your batteries so you can better serve the Lord and those in the parish and on the street.

Annual retreat. Each missionary will make a 5-Day Spiritual Retreat once a year. The time and location will be worked out with Fr. James. This is an extended time of rest in the Lord. It is a time to hear His voice and to conform yourself more and more to His will.

Exceptions. Certain events, such as illnesses, special events, or traveling, make it difficult to maintain the same consistency in our prayer schedule. Although this rhythm of prayer should be preserved when possible, circumstances will arise that relieve the missionary of his obligations. These instances should be discussed with the house servant. When a Holy Hour cannot be easily made during Exposition of the Eucharist, an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle or in a space of silent prayer is acceptable.

Fraternity

“How good and how pleasant it is, when brothers dwell together as one!” – Ps 133:1

Community life is an important aspect of being a missionary, and it should not be neglected or divorced from other aspects of missionary life. Growing more into a family is a proper outcome of a Christian community centered on the Gospel. For this reason, we should strive to intentionally nurture our fraternal bonds by investing in one another’s lives. This can be difficult at times, but the fruit of this love will bring us into greater communion with one another, God, and our future families and communities. It is through living out Christ’s new commandment, to love one another as he loved us, that we will be known as true disciples (Jn 13:34-35).

Communication. Healthy communication is key to fraternal life. Even good Christians will not get along all the time. Our little idiosyncrasies may irritate others in the house and bring conflict. When tensions rise, our response can vary between two extremes: we can react with violent confrontation, or we can harbor resentment and avoid the person. These are two extremes to avoid; instead, we can learn to walk the vulnerable path of reconciliation and mending relationships.

“As we know, the difference between a friend and a brother is precisely this: a friend is someone I have sought; a brother is given to me. It follows that I am supposed to accept the brothers who may not be that agreeable to me but who are my brothers because we are united in the same faith.” – Pope Benedict XVI

A community presents fertile soil for developing real charity, which includes: anticipating one another’s needs, mutual encouragement, supporting one another through prayer, sacrificial service, honest communication, fraternal correction, respecting boundaries, empathizing with our brothers, and preserving a spirit of joy and peace. This is a tall order for a fallible human being, but the Spirit of God, dwelling in each one of us, can transform and mend our hearts if we allow it.

Meals. During a typical day, dinners will be eaten communally, and these meals should be a time to enjoy one another’s company and give thanks for the day. An alternating schedule of cooking or a system of meal preparation can be developed based on the wishes of the community. Breakfast should be prepared and eaten during the allotted time, but each missionary will be responsible for his own food. Lunch, which will often be a means of engaging others in the apostolate, can be eaten at one’s own discretion.

“Never place any kind of activity, either spiritual or apostolic, before the spirit of being a family with the brothers or sisters with whom you are living. Wherever you go to bring Christ’s ideal... you can do no better than to try to create the spirit of a family... To sum up, it is true, complete charity.” – Chiara Lubich

Once a week, we will host Koinonia, which is a dinner to share with invited members of the parish community. We can decide whether to eat out or to prepare a meal ourselves. Invitations should be intentional, and we should seek to eat with newer or lonelier individuals in addition to more-established members of the parish. This meal functions as both a time to exercise hospitality and to foster a sense of community.

Weekly fraternal review. Once a week, the missionaries will come together to review aspects of our fraternal life. This meeting is focused on community life. Practical matters related to scheduling and the apostolate are addressed in a separate meeting for planning. The fraternal review is meant to be a space where vulnerability is welcomed and appreciated through empathetic listening. It is not a time to air complaints, but a communal effort to bring our joys and struggles into the light so that God can transform them. Important phases of the fraternal review include the following:

- Household concerns: A time to voice concerns over functional matters in community, such as role clarification or chore distribution.
- Affirmation: A time to express appreciation for the words or actions of another missionary.
- Reconciliation: A space to clear the air of hurts or resentment. This can be initiated by either the one hurt or the one committing an offense. If desired, the parties involved can step aside to talk things out. During this process we remind ourselves that people almost never intentionally seek to hurt others; Satan is our enemy, not the person in front of us who is in fact a beloved son of God and bears Christ within. This is also a time for the offended person to look within themselves and ask why they were offended, as this can reveal a hidden woundedness to explore.
- Renewal: A period to share our sorrows and joys, bringing them before the community before lifting them up to the Lord in both petition and thanksgiving. As we pray for one another, we take the time to actively listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Fraternal time. Individuals that only spend time together on working matters will soon find that their relationship becomes impersonal, excessively formal, and draining. Communities, couples, and families all need time away from formal responsibilities to enter more fully into the rejuvenating gift that is the presence of the other. Missionaries who spend quality time investing in fraternity among one another will find the community to be a life-giving fountain from which strength is drawn.

Consequently, it is in the best interest of each missionary to commit to a purposeful renewal of friendship. During one evening each week, we will intentionally spend time with one another. This can take on a variety of forms, such as playing board games, working out together, or just chilling out and conversing. The nature of the activity itself is less important than the spirit of peace and joy which should pervade this space. The missionaries should also attempt to spend at least one day each month partaking in a fraternal activity.

“Fraternal communion is at both the beginning and the end of apostolate.” – Fraternal Life in Community, released by the Vatican

Free day. Life as a missionary can be exhausting at times. We will all have periods where the nature of this life becomes difficult or even burdensome. In the interest of renewing our spirits, one weekday will be reserved as a free day, during which missionaries are encouraged to get out of the Basilica and to engage in a restorative activity or a hobby.

Housekeeping. The missionary house should be kept as free of clutter as possible. Left unattended, our home will quickly become a messy frat house. For this reason, we will clean the entire house on

Monday morning. Additionally, dishes should be cleaned and put away after meals so as to keep the kitchen functional for the next meal. Implementing an orderly cleaning system, which is neither too stringent nor too lax, can be developed at the discretion and agreement of all the missionaries.

Technology fast. In order to maintain a spirit of charity in the house and to enter into greater solidarity with our brothers and sisters on the streets, missionaries should seek to limit electronic entertainment during the week (Mon-Fri) and after night prayer. This includes recreational movies, shows, social media, and gaming. The day off is an exception to this fast. Listening to music is permissible. Computers will also be equipped with Covenant Eyes to assist us in the battle for purity. Otherwise, missionaries are encouraged to strive for simplicity as an act of solidarity with the poor.

Dating fast. In order to enter more fully into the intensity of this life, new missionaries are to abstain from dating for a year.

Formation. Once a week, the missionaries will engage in spiritual or human formation through a communal discussion. Additionally, each missionary will have a weekly spiritual chat with Fr. James.

Spiritual accompaniment. During the seasons of Lent and Advent, two missionaries will pair up and meet weekly. This meeting will be a time to revisit our fasts, discuss the joys and struggles of life, and to encourage one another in our paths toward Christ.

Vacations. To be determined, but there will likely be a decent amount of flexibility in days off based on the needs of the community and the discretion of Fr. James.

Visitors. All visitors to the missionary house should be approved by Fr. James. Women and homeless guests are not to enter the missionary house.

Apostolate

“The human person represents the primary and fundamental way for the Church.” – Pope St. John Paul the Great

Relationship. The third pillar of this rule relates to our apostolate, which is, in turn, comprised of two activities: street ministry and evangelization. At the heart of these services is a *relationship*. In fact, relationship comprises the heart of each aspect of this rule of life: prayer is a relationship with God; fraternal life is a relationship with brothers; the apostolate is a relationship with neighbors. Ultimately, this community is hinged on a belief in the power of these bonds, through which God pours his life into us and others. Our apostolate is not a social service; rather, it is a means to witness to the beauty of God’s merciful love, which brings healing and salvation to all.

Many gifts, one Spirit. A garden bears witness to the beauty of creation through a wild and purposeful diversity of different plants, flowers, and trees. Similarly, a community glorifies God through a variety of gifts, desires, personalities, and temperaments (1 Cor 12). Although it may not always be easy to serve alongside those who are different, our diversity creates a wealth of indispensable gifts. A charitable community will identify and celebrate the gift of each member, encouraging them to exercise their talents for the greater glory of God.

Street ministry. Street ministry represents a unique and radical approach to the problem of homelessness. While most programs seek to address the physical needs of the men and women on the street, we focus on addressing the poverty of ruptured relationships that precipitates homelessness. Our approach is simple: *we befriend the homeless in our midst*. The role of a missionary is not to act as a social worker who can bend down to provide a handout or pity. Our role is to befriend others wherever they are at, recognizing our own poverty, and inviting Christ to remain present throughout the encounter.

“People come... to serve the needy. They only stay if they have discovered that they themselves are needy, and that the good news is announced by Jesus to the poor, not to those who serve the poor.” – Jean Vanier

More details on this activity are provided in the guide. Our role in this apostolate will require a commitment to seeking out the lost sheep, which often means going above and beyond the call of duty. Ideally (and this is subject to change based on shifting needs of the program), street ministry will involve four ‘street walks’ each week at two locations. Missionaries should go out in groups of two, and Fridays will be a day to accompany others, such as college students, in our ministry. The timing of this work may fluctuate based on the needs of our friends on the street, with whom we may also grab meals or invite to other activities. During the weekend, we will host an event where we lead others on the streets; this may involve a meal ministry or a street walk.

Evangelization. The second arm of the apostolate, evangelization, represents an important aspect of our work, particularly as it pertains to the Basilica parish. This ministry may take several forms depending on the needs of the parish, Fr. James, and the Director of Evangelization. It is likely that we will be assisting in Bible studies, series such as Discovering Christ, and plugging in to other events

or groups associated with the parish. Some aspects of our fraternal life, such as the Koinonia, also represent a means of evangelization within the parish.

Planning. Successful implementation of apostolic activities necessitates planning, which will occur as necessary over the course of the week. Post-breakfast represents a useful time to discuss the tasks of each day. However, a meeting to discuss the upcoming events and responsibilities of the entire week will be held each Monday morning, before or after the house cleaning. This represents an opportunity to hash out many of the practical details of the apostolate.

It is also be beneficial to take time to reflect on our ability to meet objectives after an eventful day, and dinner is a good time to have this discussion. Whether our team falls short of or exceeds its goals, we should always ask, “What can we learn from this?” This means looking for the underlying reasons behind each success or failure, celebrating achievements (even small ones), and lifting up all our work to the Lord. Throughout the apostolate, we can ask Jesus to hold onto all our fears, anxieties, and expectations so that we can engage in daily tasks solely to bring him glory and honor.

“We could scrub the floor for a tired friend, or dress a wound for a patient in a hospital, or lay the table and wash up for the family; but we shall not do it in martyr spirit or with that worse spirit of self-congratulation, of feeling that we are making ourselves more perfect, more unselfish, more positively kind. We shall do it just for one thing, that our hands make Christ’s hands in our life, that our service may let Christ serve through us, that our patience may bring Christ’s patience back to the world.” – Caryl Houselander

Roles. Each missionary should have a clear understanding of his role in the apostolate. As our program develops and missionaries gain experience, this should become clearer. It is the task of the house servant, working in conjunction with Fr. James, to flesh out these details. In the event that a missionary’s role appears muddled, it should be brought to the attention of the house servant so that the community can work out the details as best they are able. This will likely occur multiple times over the course of the year given the shifting nature of needs and responsibilities.

Schedule

The schedule for each week follows the same rhythm, but modifications will occur based on shifting needs and special events. In general, the daily schedule is as follows:

- Morning Prayer
- Mass
- Breakfast
- Morning activity
- Lunch
- Afternoon activity
- Free time
- Adoration
- Dinner
- Evening activity
- Night prayer

The morning, afternoon, and evening activities follow the pattern below:

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Sunday	Mass/brunch	FREE	Evangelization (DC)
Monday	Cleaning/meeting	Streets	Koinonia
Tuesday	Streets	Formation	Evangelization
Wednesday	Streets	Fraternal review	Fraternal time
Thursday	FREE	FREE	FREE
Friday	FREE	Streets (college students)	Evangelization
Saturday	FREE/planning	Streets (meal ministry)	FREE

Other concerns

Quarterly reflection. Being human, we often develop a selective and fragmented recollection of this document, which can become an oppressive set of rules if we miss its spirit and intention. For this reason, the community should revisit the rule every three months by reading and reflecting on it privately or together. During reflection, we should ask ourselves:

- How am I living by the rule or failing to do so?
- What did I read that I needed to be reminded of?
- Do I need to recommit or make changes in my life?
- Are there sections I believe we should discuss as a household?

“There is a deep joy to be found in laying things down, in giving things up, in reducing one’s options in one area in order to gain something more valuable in another... We use our freedom to restrict our choices, in order to gain greater freedom in areas we think are more important.” – St. Anselm

Accountability. In the event that undue harm or stress is placed on an individual or the community due to another missionary, the model of fraternal correction offered in Mt 18:15-17 ought to be applied. All household members with the exception of the offender should meet to consider an appropriate response. Ultimately, Fr. James has the final say in decisions. In the event that a conflict cannot be resolved, we will appeal to him as a reliable authority to make a resolution.

Flexibility. This rule is meant to establish a healthy and fruitful path to holiness within community. It is not meant to be enforced as a strict and unforgiving set of rules, and appropriate modifications will occur throughout the year. Nevertheless, significant or consistent deviations from this rule should be addressed as a community.

Afterword. We pray that this rule of life will be an authentic guide to leading us closer to the Lord both as individuals and as a community. We ask the Lord to bless us in our perseverance that it may bear much fruit. Pray for us, patron saints! Lead us, Mary! Come, Holy Spirit! We give you permission to transform our lives and this community in a new and powerful way.

*The LORD bless you and keep you!
The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!
Numbers 6:24-26*