

Summary:

The thesis focuses on a piece of work in the form of a monastic rule which considerably influenced the whole Christian world, significantly contributed to the formation of spirituality of monastic communities, shaped the European culture and has much to say even today. The rule derives its name from its author, St. Benedict of Nursia. Given the considerable impact of his work on shaping the subsequent history of monasticism, St. Benedict is rightly called the Father of Western Monasticism.

The first part introduces the Rule of Saint Benedict (*Regula Benedicti*). It refers to the period of its creation when certain common foundations of monastic life existed but lacked any solid anchoring. Despite the existence of other monastic rules, the Rule of Saint Benedict became the leading one thanks to its clarity and brevity.

The second part deals with the Rule of the Master (*Regula Magistri*), an anonymous collection of monastic precepts which played a significant role as a source material for the Rule of Saint Benedict. St. Benedict took a large number of rules from it while he edited some of the original rules and intentionally omitted others. He moderated the strict text of the Rule of the Master since he was aware of human weakness. He infused the precepts with love.

The third part, the longest in its content, focuses on the spiritual dimension of the Rule of Saint Benedict which seeks to follow Christ. St. Benedict's Tools of Good Works set a strategy of fighting which resulted in restoration of human dignity and fulfillment of the Image of God (*Imago Dei*). The power of these spiritual tools has preserved throughout history and keeps on being perceived as an effective weapon on the path to self-knowledge and spiritual maturation. St. Benedict's appeals inspire restoration of humanity and open a dimension leading to watchfulness, obedience, humility and love. St. Benedict's legacy is a possible way to restoring and implementing the *Imago Dei* because he grew up on the words of the Scripture, gained experience in an exemplary and virtuous life, and confirmed his power in the existence of the Order of Saint Benedict (*Ordo Sancti Benedicti*), a significant religious order which is still active worldwide. The legacy should not serve only behind the walls of monasteries because its scope in the field of spiritual renewal has a lot to offer to the people outside the monastic world too.