

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 80 (2014)  
**Heft:** [2]

**Artikel:** Rule of St. Benedict : prescriptions for a monastic life  
**Autor:** Fill-Weidmann, Trudi  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943936>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 13.12.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**



## Rule of St Benedict: Prescriptions for a Monastic Life

Benedict of Nursia was born around 480 to a Roman nobleman. As a young student, he did not agree with the decadence of Roman society and withdrew from it, instead joining a group of men away from the city. He discovered a cave and lived in it for three years in solitude, his only contact being with the person who came to bring him food once a week. People in the vicinity started to notice him as a spiritual man and made him Abbot of a local monastery when one was needed. However, the monks did not like the strict rules he imposed and tried to poison him. Such was the strength of his faith that he averted death by a miracle.

In 529, he moved to Monte Cassino, a rugged hill near Rome, where he founded a monastery. As the Abbot of the monastery, he devised the Rule of St. Benedict. In 73 chapters, the Rule determines in every detail how monks should live and eat and dress, how God should be revered, how a monastery should be organised, and how monasteries relate to the outside world. This Rule has been the basis for all monastic life, for men and women, and for Catholic, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox and Lutheran clergy alike. It is from these Rules that the saying 'ora et labora' stems from: 'Pray and work'.

The guiding thread throughout all the rules is humility. In a posture of humility Benedict is depicted: Head bowed, hands folded in prayer. Benedict died of a high fever in 543. He was declared a saint in 1220 by Pope Honorius III and Pope Paul VI declared him the patron saint of Europe in 1964. The medal of St Benedict, also named the "devil-chasing medal", contains the image of St. Benedict on one side and a series of symbolic abbreviations on and around a cross on the other side. It is used in rosaries or individually to ward off spiritual and physical dangers in the face of evil, poison and temptation.

Many monasteries around Switzerland are based on the Benedictine Rule, and some of them nowadays are open to non-clergy people wanting to stay and enjoy the peace and simplicity of the monasteries and their surroundings.

By Trudi Fill-Weidmann



Saint Benedict of Nursia, detail from a fresco by Fra Angelico, San Marco, Florence (c. 1400–1455)

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fra\\_Angelico\\_031.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Fra_Angelico_031.jpg)

### Consigli della Nonna

1. If you are holding a garden party, keep insects at bay and away from your guests by placing a bowl filled with apple cider vinegar outside.
2. If you find your compost bins are attracting rats and mice, make sure you aren't including any meat or uncooked food and spray the bottom edge with undiluted vinegar as a further precaution.
3. Water butts are invaluable in the garden, but can attract mosquitos. Spray the lid and top with undiluted vinegar to reduce their numbers.



By Ursula Nixon



**Margaret Mortimer**

Residential Sales

mob. 027 280 6772  
bus. 09 478 9089  
ah. 09 410 4848  
email. m.mortimer@barfoot.co.nz

**Barfoot & Thompson**

Licensed under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008



Mairangi Bay Branch  
396 Beach Road  
P O Box 65075, Mairangi Bay, Auckland  
fax. 09 478 9086  
[www.barfoot.co.nz](http://www.barfoot.co.nz)



**Heirloom Cookie Moulds**  
Hundreds of Moulds to Choose From

**SPRINGERLE COTTAGE**

**Suitable for:**  
WAX • CARD MAKING • COOKIES • CLAY

**\*Old-Fashioned Artistry\***  
Deb Hrstich - 027 343 2130  
[springerlecottage@paradise.net.nz](mailto:springerlecottage@paradise.net.nz)

**Quality Handcrafted Antique Replicas**