

## ST BENEDICT'S RULE - HOW THE MONKS LIVED

St Benedict founded the Benedictine Order in AD 520, and a few years later he wrote the Holy Rule, which describes the way monks should behave in a monastery. We can learn a lot about the lives of the early monks by reading the famous Benedictine Rule:

### **Sleeping**

'Monks shall sleep clothed, with belts or with ropes around their waists; and they shall not have their knives at their sides while they sleep, lest in their sleep they should injure someone.'



### **Bedding**

'... a straw mattress, a blanket, a coverlet and a pillow will be enough. The beds must be searched by the abbot, to prevent monks hoarding things.'

### **Baths**

'Let the baths be allowed to the sick as often as necessary; but baths should only be rarely allowed to the healthy, and especially to the young.'

### **Food**

'...let two cooked dishes be enough for all the brothers: a third may be added if it is possible to grow or buy fruit and vegetables. One full pound of bread shall suffice for a day.'



### Clothes

'The monks should each have a cowl and a gown; in winter hairy, in summer plain, and a working garment. And for the feet, shoes and boots.'



### Conversation

'... as for rude jokes or silly talk or making people laugh, these we should condemn and ban them forever in all places.'



### Private Belongings

'To cut out this vice ... everything necessary should be provided by the abbot - a cowl, tunic, stockings, boots, belt, knife, pen, needle, handkerchief, writing tablets - so that all excuse of need is removed.'

### Work and Idleness

'Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore, at fixed times, the brothers ought to be busy in manual labour; and again, at fixed times, in sacred reading. ... One or two elders shall be appointed, who shall go round the monastery at the hours in which the brothers are reading, checking that no troublesome brother is being idle - being of no use to himself, but also stirring up others.'



## DAILY LIFE IN THE MONASTERY

A monk's daily timetable was one of work and prayer. Do you think the monks had more free time than you? Did they get more sleep? How many times a day did the monks go to church? How many meals did they have each day? How many times a day do you eat? Do you think the monks had an easy life?

TIME	WHAT THEY DO	WHAT YOU DO
Midnight	Church Service - Matins followed by Lauds	
1:00 am	return to bed	
5:45 am	Wake-up	
6:00 am (or sunrise)	Church Service -- Prime	
6:30 am	Breakfast	
7:00 am	Chapter House for Mass, Confession, given jobs to do. Private reading & Prayer	
9:00 am	Church Service -- Terce & High Mass	
9:30 am	Work	
12:00 noon	Church Service -- Sext	
1:00 pm	Midday Meal	
1:30 pm	Sleep, Reading or Prayer	
3:00 pm	Church Service -- Nones	
3:30 pm	Work	
6:00 pm (or sunset)	Church Service -- Vespers	
7:00 pm	Private Reading and Prayer	
9:00 pm	Church Service -- Compline	
9:30 pm	to bed	

Fill in your daily timetable and compare it with the monks'.

## WHO WERE THE MONKS?

Mediaeval monks were religious men who usually lived apart from everyone else in a range of buildings that made up a monastery. They devoted their lives to study, prayer and manual labour. They were forbidden to own personal property. Communities of nuns also lived in monasteries, called convents or nunneries. Monks and nuns performed many roles in the middle ages.

Life in a monastery was often much safer than in the surrounding cities and countryside, where war, violence, disease and hunger were very common.

Many different monastic orders were founded during the Middle Ages, like the Cistercians, Cluniacs, Augustinians, Premonstratensians and Carthusians.



## WHAT DID THE MONKS EAT?

The Monks of Micklegate would have had large gardens, orchards, and fish ponds in the 7 acres of land surrounding the monastery buildings. Here they would grow the food they needed to feed themselves and their many guests. What would they have eaten?

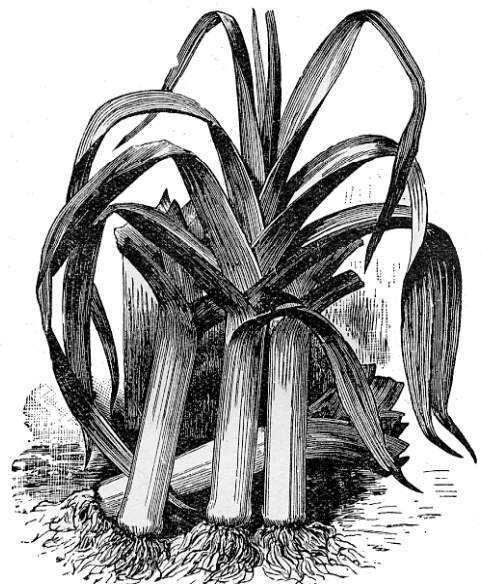


The monks would have grown a lot of fruit in their orchards.

Many of the vegetables we have today were unknown to the monks, but they would have grown plenty of leeks, beans, onions and turnips. They grew lots of peas, cabbages and garlic too.

Only fish, not meat, was eaten on Fridays, so the monks would have had a well-stocked fish pond.

The monks would have baked their own bread from barley or wheat grown on their farms.



Leeks



Turnips



Onions

WHAT PRODUCE DID THE MONKS GET FROM THESE PLANTS AND ANIMALS?



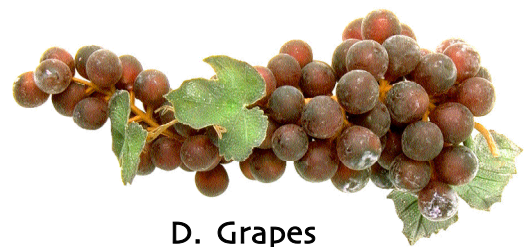
A. Bees



B. Sheep



C. Cows



D. Grapes

Answers:

A. The bees would have provided honey to eat. Sugar was very expensive in mediaeval times so honey was used as a sweetener. It was also used in herbal medicine. Beeswax made the finest candles. Bees also pollinated the plants and flowers in the gardens and orchards.

B. Sheep were very important to many monasteries. As well as eating the meat, the monks used the wool to make cloth. Most of the clothes in mediaeval times were woollen, as were blankets, curtains and wall hangings.

C. Cows provided milk that could be made into cream, butter and cheese. They also provided meat, tallow and leather. The tallow could be made into candles and soap.

D. The climate was warmer in mediaeval times and the Monks of Micklegate may well have grown grapes to be made into wine. But mostly they will have brewed ale. Ale and wine were much safer to drink than water!

# MONASTIC WORDSEARCH

M	D	H	C	O	N	V	E	N	T	P	E	N	S
R	O	A	M	Y	A	W	E	E	S	R	M	J	C
R	R	B	O	H	L	O	T	O	C	A	I	A	S
O	M	I	N	F	I	R	M	A	R	Y	C	C	T
R	I	T	K	L	E	S	N	S	I	E	K	O	R
C	T	S	S	T	N	H	U	A	P	R	L	B	E
H	O	L	Y	T	R	I	N	I	T	Y	E	S	F
A	R	I	R	R	O	P	S	E	O	I	G	W	E
R	Y	M	O	N	A	S	T	E	R	Y	A	E	C
D	R	R	T	B	E	N	E	D	I	C	T	L	T
C	H	A	P	T	E	R	H	O	U	S	E	L	O
C	L	O	I	S	T	E	R	C	M	I	N	K	R
C	H	U	R	C	H	B	E	S	T	I	A	R	Y

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|--------------|--------------|
| ALIEN        | INK          |
| BENEDICT     | JACOB'S WELL |
| BESTIARY     | MICKLEGATE   |
| CHAPTERHOUSE | MONASTERY    |
| CHURCH       | MONKS        |
| CLOISTER     | NUNS         |
| CONVENT      | ORCHARD      |
| DORMITORY    | PENS         |
| HABITS       | PRAYER       |
| HOLY TRINITY | REFECTORY    |
| INFIRMARY    | SCRIPTORIUM  |
|              | WORSHIP      |