

# Monasteries and Community

Keep these ideas in mind as you study **Unit 2, Session 8**.

By the end of the fifth century, the Roman empire started to crumble and entered a period called the Early Middle Ages, or Dark Ages. Life was difficult for most people. During this fearful time, monastic living, where communities of monks or nuns lived together and devoted themselves to prayer and labor, gave hope to many of the faithful. **PAGE 57**

Benedict wrote a guide for monastic life that we call the Rule of Saint Benedict. Over the years, many rules for communities have been written. **PAGES 57 AND 58**

Benedictine monks serve the Church in many ways, including feeding those who are hungry, providing shelter to travelers and pilgrims, and healing those who are sick. **PAGE 58**

Men or women living in religious communities consecrate themselves to God by professing the evangelical counsels. Evangelical counsels are the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience that help men and women live holy lives in accordance with the Gospel. **PAGE 59**

Temperance, or moderation, is the Cardinal Virtue that helps us control our attraction to pleasure so that our natural desires are kept within proper limits. **PAGE 59**

All baptized Christians are called to live holy lives by practicing the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. **PAGE 59**

Thomas Aquinas was a great theologian, an expert in the study of God and his Revelation to the world. The Dominicans have made intellectual contributions to the Church. **PAGE 60**

Ignatius of Loyola founded the Jesuits, also known as the Society of Jesus. **PAGE 60**

Saint Anthony founded Christian monasticism, a form of religious life in which men and women live out their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a stable community. **PAGE 60**

We are called to live out the evangelical counsels according to our state in life, whether we join religious communities, remain single, or get married. **PAGE 60**

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