

Anyone who gives himself with good will to the **RULE** and to **PRAYER AND LABOR, AND TO THE POVERTY AND OBEDIENCE** asked for and expected by the Holy Rule, will find himself deepened, broadened and matured. The Monk grows and becomes stout in spirit, not by a set of **EXTERNAL** rigid systems of piety and observances, but simply by working in the fields, in the kitchen, in the shops, in the barn, by chanting the Praises of God, by His Holy Reading, by enduring his fasts, the heat, the cold, and the poor and simple life. Then, without even being aware of it, the Monk gradually finds his way in his **SEARCH FOR GOD**, and this leads him to sanctity.



The Monk is a man of prayer, and the **MONK ALWAYS PRAYS**, but he is not always saying prayers. As can be seen, the Monk cannot spend his life on his knees, incessantly talking to God; the Monk has to work if he is to eat. The Monk's life of prayer is a life wherein he is **EVER CONSCIOUS** of God. To be a **MAN OF PRAYER** is to be a man whose **EVERY** thought, word and deed is not necessarily **ABOUT** God, but **DIRECTED** to God. Such a man

of God eats and drinks, sleeps and works, milks cows and cooks in the kitchen, laughs and cries, suffers and rejoices, triumphs and fails in God and for God, and only "THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED!" (U.I.O.G.D.). Taken together with the "OPUS DEI" (the chanting of the Divine Office) this can only be looked upon as a peace experience without equal. Each day, certain hours are set apart for Holy Reading. In Benedictine Life, this does not differ from mental prayer (MEDITATION). One passes from reading to petition and contemplation. To use the words of the holy Abbot Smaragdus,

