



One Step Closer

*A Workbook for Creating
a Personal Rule of Life*

ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL
ANNUAL PLEDGE DRIVE, 2011

“The word ‘rule’ derives from a Latin word, *regula*, which implies not so much a system of rules or laws, but rather a way of *regulating* and *regularizing* our lives so that we can stay on the path we have set out for ourselves. A rule is like a trellis which offers support and guidance for a plant, helping it to grow in a certain direction. A rule of life is *descriptive* in that it articulates our intentions and identifies the ways in which we want to live. And when we fall short of these intentions, the rule becomes *prescriptive*, showing us how we can return to the path that we have set for ourselves and recapture our original vision. It is not something fixed and rigid, but something which can and should be adapted to our present circumstances and shaped to fit our current needs and desires.”

Brother David Vryhof, Society of St. John the Evangelist

Two prayer exercises you might find helpful in beginning to design a rule of life:

In prayer, imagine yourself in a conversation with Jesus in which you describe to him what it is you value most and how you want to live faithfully in the world. Ask what he values most and how he wants you to live.

You might imagine yourself at the end of your life and reflect on what you would like others to think of you or say about you at that time. You might even write your own eulogy. This meditation helps clarify what is most important to us by helping us reflect on who and what we want to be/become.

Suggestions for Use

In the pages of this workbook, we offer some topics and questions you might want to consider in designing your own rule of life. Here are some suggestions for how you might use this workbook:

- **Invite God into the process:** Say a prayer for God's guidance as you sit down to meditate on these questions. You may want to pray about each question, or stop and say a prayer as you come to the end of each section.
- **Take time:** Allow yourself time to dwell with each of the questions here. You may not immediately know the answer and your answers may change over time. You might find it helpful to work through the workbook's sections over a series of days.
- **Be gentle:** Remember that this is a chance for you to celebrate and sanctify what matters most to you, not to berate yourself for what you aren't doing.
- **Be realistic:** Being honest about what you are capable of accomplishing and what your schedule allows is essential in creating a rule. An overly strenuous rule will not be sustainable or enjoyable to keep.
- **Write your goals down:** Putting pen to paper asks you to engage in a more concrete way than simply thinking about a theme or question. Use the space provided in the pages of this workbook to write down concrete goals.

Adapted from "Living Intentionally: A Workbook for Creating a Personal Rule of Life" by Br. David Vryhof, Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge, Mass.

**The Spiritual Life:
My Relationship with God and with the Church**

How would I describe the relationship with God that I desire and seek?

What pattern or rhythm of prayer (including times for silent reflection or for retreat) would fit my present circumstances and bring me closer to that goal?

How will I incorporate times for regular worship into my life?

Is there a small group available to me that meets regularly and prays for each other?

Is there one activity I can add to my weekly schedule to contribute to the life of my parish?

From the preceding questions, synthesize your thoughts for how you will shape your relationship with God and the Church into two or three achievable goals. Write them here:

Physical:
My Relationship with My Body

Do I regularly see a doctor for check-ups?

What are my goals for exercise?

What are my goals for nutrition?

What are my goals for regular sleep?

How can I implement these goals?

From the preceding questions, synthesize your thoughts for how you will shape your relationship with your body into two or three achievable goals. Write them here:

**Financial:
Giving as God Intended**

Do I have a budget? Do I feel in control of my money or does my money control me? Do I have a long range plan for my financial life?

Do I give to the church? Do I give a percentage of my income? Am I working toward the tithe?

Do I have a will? Have I placed the church in my will?

To what other charities or causes do I believe God is calling me to contribute?

How will I carry my financial plans out over the long term?

How can I live more simply and waste less, to contribute to my financial well-being and care for the environment?

From the preceding questions, synthesize your thoughts for how you will shape your relationship with your money into two or three achievable goals. Write them here:

My Relationships with Others

What are the four to five most intimate relationships in my life?

How can I spend adequate time with these people?

How can I express my love for these people in concrete ways?

What are activities I can add to my weekly schedule to enhance my most important relationships?

From the preceding questions, synthesize your thoughts for how you will shape your relationship with your loved ones into two or three achievable goals. Write them here:
