

RB 5 Obedience Structure: Aquinata Bockmann ODB

***Obedience as Listening and Responding RB 5:1-10***

[Benedict is interested in basic spiritual attitudes not efficiency.

The ultimate issue is love for God. We are to discern the divine call in all the circumstances of our lives.]

***Two possible goals: eternal life and grace RB 5:1-3***

<sup>1</sup>The basic road to progress for the humble person is through **prompt obedience**. <sup>2</sup>This is characteristic of those who hold **Christ** more precious than all else. <sup>3</sup>For that reason, on account of the holy **service** they have professed, and because of the dread of hell and the glory of eternal life,

***Emphasizes the characteristic of speedy obedience RB 5:4-10***

<sup>4</sup>as soon as something is commanded by the superior, they waste no time in executing it as if it were divinely commanded. <sup>5</sup>The Holy One says of them: *When you heard me, you obeyed me* (Ps 17[18]:45). <sup>6</sup>Likewise, God tells **teachers**: *Whoever listens to you listens to me* (Luke 10:16). [Obedience is rooted in listening to God. Can be seen as an anchoritic style of obedience, which involves a master and a disciple.] <sup>7</sup>Therefore, such people immediately abandon their own affairs and put aside **self-will**. <sup>8</sup>They immediately empty their hands, **dropping whatever they are doing** to carry out with the **quick step** of obedience the order of the one who commands. <sup>9</sup>It is as if the order were given by the **teacher** and carried out by the **disciple** at the same instant. Both command and response take place almost simultaneously with liveliness caused by awe for God.

<sup>10</sup>It is **love** that impels these people to pursue [progress toward eternal life.]

### **Definition of Cenobitic (Communal) obedience vv11-13**

#### **Giving up self-will, living under human authority, and living in community RB 5:11,13**

<sup>11</sup>Therefore they seize on the narrow way, of which God says: *The route that leads to life is narrow* (Matt 7:14). <sup>12</sup>That is why they do not wish to live by their own lights, obeying their own **desires and wants**. [theme of desire to have a prioress over them.] Rather, they prefer to walk according to the judgment and command of another, living in cenobitic community with a prioress over them.

#### **Obedience in Imitation of Christ: Jesus is the model of human obedience. RB 5:13**

<sup>13</sup>Doubtless, people such as these imitate Christ, who said: *I did not come to do my own will, but the will of the one who sent me* (John 6:38).

#### **Obedience as inner disposition without murmuring and with willingness RB 5:14-18**

#### **Obedience as Liberation RB 5:14-19**

<sup>14</sup>This same obedience will only be **acceptable** to God and humanly attractive if the command is not executed **fearfully, slowly or listlessly**, nor with **murmuring** or **refusal**. <sup>15</sup>For obedience given to superiors is given **to God**, who said: *Whoever listens to you, listens to me* (Luke 10:16). [Obedience is rooted in listening to God.] <sup>16</sup> And the disciples are to give this obedience in a **good disposition**, for *God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor 9:7). [There is a progression from quick to glad obedience.] <sup>17</sup>If a disciple obeys grudgingly and murmurs not only out loud but also internally, <sup>18</sup>even while carrying out the order, it will not be acceptable to God. For God sees the heart of the **murmurer**,

#### **Two possible goals: eternal life and grace RB 5:19**

<sup>19</sup>who will receive no thanks for such a deed. On the contrary, if satisfaction is not made, penalty will be incurred.