



The Pachomian's and Basilian's rules and the franciscan rule

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Abstract: *The monastic life lived together requires rules to be carried out in good order. Besides aspects of the knowledge of holy texts, prayer in common and the practice of Christian virtues, the monastic rules also deal with practical aspects of the monastic life. This study shows that, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, both the great Eastern monarchs (Saint Pachomius the Great and Saint Basil the Great) and Saint Francis of Assisi shared common points in understanding the main challenges of monks.*

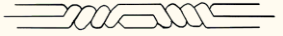
Keywords: *monachism, monastic rules, Saint Pachomius the Great, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Francis of Assisi.*

1. Introduction: the beginning of monachal rules

Monastic cenobitic life is seen by some Holy Fathers as beginning from the time of the Holy Apostles. Thus, it is believed that the first Christian community in Jerusalem is the one who chose for the first time this way of life¹.

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¹ Saint JOHN CASSIAN, *Spirituals Conversations XVII*, 5-6 [col. Parents and Church Writers, vol. 57], translation of Professor Vasile Cojocaru and Professor David Popescu, preface, introductory study and notes by Professor Nicolae Chițescu, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Romanian



Unlike monastic anachoretic life, living together has claimed from the beginning the existence of a rule to which all together livings conforms. This explains the appearance of various monastic rules with the spread of cenobitic life. In fact, in the first monastic sources, such as the pachomian's rule, for example, the common life term (koinos bios) indicates several realities:

a) the unity of space: the pachomian monks did not yet live under the same roof, but there was a wall with a single door separating them from the others. In the enclosed space, certain edifices were for common use: the church, the kitchen, the refectory. One of the most important elements of this experience was common prayer and meals in common, as a way to eat almost liturgical².

b) the unity of a large family: in the sense that the first monastic communities behaved like mass fellowship, prayer and labor.

c) uniformity: all wore the same clothing, lived under the same rules of quality and quantity of food received, accepting explicit uniformity in any mode of behavior.

d) life ordered under a common rule: the tradition of heavenly origin³ of the Pachomius rule demonstrates the authority that is assigned to it.

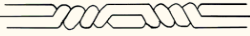
e) „ordinary” life: it was chosen to live like „common” people. According to St. John Cassian's testimony⁴, the

Orthodox Church Bible and Mission Institute (forwards IBMBOR), 1990, p. 628-631.

² Tomáš ŠPIDLÍK, *Monasticism according to the tradition of the Christian East*, translation from French into Italian by Maria Campatelli, Rome, Lipa Edition, 2007, p. 260.

³ PALLADIUS, *The Lausiac History*, translation, introduction and notes by the PhD Priest Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, Bucharest, IBMBOR, 2007, p. 71-74.

⁴ Saint JOHN CASSIAN, *Monastery settlements IV, I* [col. Parents and Church Writers, vol. 57], translation by Prof. Vasile Cojocaru and Prof. David Popescu, preface, introductory study and notes by Prof. Nicolae Chițescu, Bucharest, IBMBOR, 1990, p. 141.



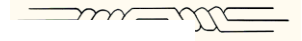
Pachomians monks have become more numerous than others and more disciplined because their lives avoided the eccentricity of solitaires, their asceticism was moderate, obedience was considered more than exaggerated ascetic zeal. The monasteries were open to any „normal” Christian who wanted to live the Gospel seriously.

In order to have a greater unity between the members of the same community, it was important that the monastic rule to which it referred it was as detailed as possible. However, it was not easy to implement the rule in its entirety. In order to maintain the common order, it was sometimes necessary to appeal even to a certain type of violence⁵.

Saint Basil the Great was aware that purely human means were not capable of creating spiritual unity; that is why only the word of God who created the world is able to represent the „universal rule” consciously and freely accepted by all; and as this word was transmitted in the Holy Scripture, all the rules of Saint Basil the Great make nothing else but to point out, interpret, emphasize the centrality and content of the Word of God in Scripture.

In the Orient, the most famous monastic rules are, in chronological order, that of Saint Pachomius the Great and Saint Basil the Great, while in the West we have in the first centuries the Augustinian and Benedictine rules from which they will later develop other rules among which the Franciscan rule, which by its content proves many similarities to the Oriental rules of the 4th century.

⁵ Saint PACHOMIUS THE GREAT, *The monastic rules*, Iași, Credința Strămoșească Publishing House, 1998, p. 42: „All children who are not afraid of sins, and because of their incomprehension do not think of God's rightful reward and they cannot be guided by word, to be beaten with the rod until they learn the fear of God and the discipline of the Christian life”.



2. The rule of Saint Pachomius the Great

The Sources that speak about the life and writings of Saint Pachomius the Great and who have come to us have raised many divergences among researchers. Coptic Codices showing aspects of Saint Pachomius have been published by Émile Amélineau since 1889, while Greek codices have been the subject of Bolandist research⁶, which has structured the found information in six main documents. The purpose of analyzing these sources was to have the most accurate and reliable information on the founder of cenobitic life. There was even a trend of opinion, determined by the publication of the Arabic version of Saint Pahomie's life, which also called into question the morality of the wilderness parents of that time⁷.

Even if before Saint Pachomius the Great (290-346)⁸ there was a monastic form of cenobitic life⁹, is commonly accepted that he wrote the first manual of rules for monks in circumstances that reached almost 7000 apprentices in all the monasteries, including 1400 apprentices at Tavenisiot monastery.

⁶ The term Bolandist is used to indicate a group of scholars, also known as the Society of Bolandists, who worked on a critical edition of documentary sources about the saints distributed after the days of year, named *Acta Sanctorum*. After the death of the founder of this society, the Jesuit Dutch Heribert Roswey, the work was led by the Belgian Jean Bolland, hence the name given to this group of learners.

⁷ The presentation of the sources related to the life and work of Saint Pachomius the Great as well as the links between them are found at Jean Gribomont, *The Coptic life of Saint Pachomius*, translation, introduction and notes by Francesca Moscatelli, Padova, Messaggero Edition, 1981, p. 7-21.

⁸ Luigi D'AYALA VALVA, *The path of the monk - the monastic life according to the tradition of the fathers*, Italian version, preface by Enzo Bianchi, Magnano, Qiqajon Edition, 2009, p. 29.

⁹ From the letters of Saint Clement the Roman, Saint Ciprian, Saint Methodius, and others, it is apparent that even before Saint Pachomius the Great there were small spiritual communities, more of the ascetic women who lived in private houses through villages and towns.

The Monastic Rules of Saint Pachomius¹⁰ reveals a monastic organization similar to the military system. The monks were divided into groups of ten people who practiced the same profession. They lived in a body of cells, which, in their entirety, was called „house” (domus), led by a „teacher” (praepositus). Three or four „houses” consisted of a „tribe” (tribus) led by the eldest „house” teacher. Each „house” had an administrator and administrator helper, and the whole monastery was a general administrator. The teacher had all the administrative and spiritual care of his disciples. Above all was the „avva”, the abbot of the monastery¹¹.

The basic rule for the pachomian monk is Sacred Scripture and especially the Holy Gospel. Pious Pachomius had learned to guide his spiritual struggle „trained by the divine Scriptures and especially the Gospel”¹². The teachings he gave to his disciples had no other source: „We rejoiced every day and taught us the holy commandments until we follow each of his counsels drawn from the Scriptures of Christ”¹³.

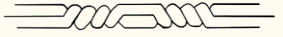
The Coptic Variants of the Life of Saint Pachomius kept the memory of the profound impression of his charismatic word that

¹⁰ *The Monastic Rules* of Pious Pachomius the Great were written first in the Egyptian language, then in the Greek language from which the Blessed Jerome was translated into Latin. This is the only version that has come to us. (see Volume XXIII of Migne Patrologiae Latinae). In general, the *Rules* are divided into 142 articles. They are followed by *The Teachings and Establishments of the Pious Pachomius*, from Articles 143 to 159; then *The Teachings and Judgments of the Pious Pachomius*, from Articles 160 to 176, and *The Teachings and Laws of the Pious Pachomius (about the six prayers of the Vespers and the assembly of the six prayers that are made at each house)* from Article 177 to 194.

¹¹ Saint PACHOMIUS THE GREAT, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹² François HALKIN, *Sancti Pachomii Vitae Graecae*, Bruxelles, Société des Bollandistes, 1932, p. 11 *apud* Placide DESEILLE / Enzo BIANCHI, *Pachomius and the community life*, Magnano, Qiqajon Editions, 1998, p. 90.

¹³ Placide DESEILLE / Enzo BIANCHI, *op.cit.*, p. 91.



he left in the heart of brothers when he was interpreting the Gospel¹⁴. Pachomius himself said that it is possible that a single psalm is sufficient to save us if we read it well and follow its doctrine; above all we have the gospel of the Lord, the fulfillment of all the Scriptures.

There are numerous passages of rules that insist on the need for the learning of scriptural texts, at least in the New Testament and in the Psalms, so that they can be repeat and thinking to them as often as possible¹⁵.

The monastic rule of the Pious Pachomius is not intended to replace the Holy Scripture since it always make refers to the sacred text. The rules are not a priori concept, nor do they correspond to an abstract organizational ideal, but they are the fruit of a concrete experience that day after day has shown how the evangelical spirit can translate into the everyday life of a community that protects the spiritual progress of everyone. The rules only aim to foster the feeling of love, by making those who are addressed to spiritual people, God's people.

The impression that *The Rules* of the Pious Pachomius are leaving is that they mostly deal with the practical aspects of living together. After the first articles focusing on obedience to superiors, and attending the Sunday service, there is a set of articles that talk about: the things to be done in the monastery, the behavior and the place at the table, the reporting to the sick people, the regulation of the rest and washing clothes, dressing in and out of the monastery, limiting dialogue between brothers, punishing those who lose some of the monastery's. Among these

¹⁴ And when he spoke, there was a great light, for which the brothers were very impressed by the words of our father Pachomius, like dazzling lightning coming out of his mouth, and they were like wine-drinkers, as it is written: Their heart to be happy like the heart of those who drink wine (Zechariah 10: 7).

¹⁵ Saint PACHOMIUS THE GREAT, *op. cit.*, rules: 3; 6; 13; 28; 36; 37; 59; 60; 116; 122; 139; 140.

articles are also some who are talking about the reception of those who choose to let the world live and come to the monastery¹⁶ as well as the reception that the brothers must do when they are visited by priests or monks¹⁷.

An interesting aspect is that the rules regarding practical life can be improved, as it is written in Rule 103: „If any of the above-established ordinances would no longer correspond to the needs of life, it would be change with another more appropriate”.

The rightful and saving nature of the rules can be seen in the last article of *The Teachings and Rules of the Pious Pachomius*: „Anyone who is going to deviate from the above, despising without reprobation of conscience, to repent, because we desire to him to acquire the kingdom of heaven”¹⁸.

The ideal pachomian proposed to his disciples could be expressed by his exhortation: live according to God's will. Of course, it is not enough for you to obey external laws and written rules, but it is imperative to obey the voice of conscience and inspiration of the Holy Spirit¹⁹. Thus, in the temptation, the monk will find peace subsisting in his own heart to listen to the inner inspiration given by the spirit of Christ:

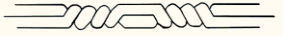
„If it happens to you to quarrel with one of the brothers who upset you with a word, or if your heart hurts a brother saying: «It's not worth it», or if the enemy instigates you in regard to someone: «It does not deserve these glories», if you receive the devil's word or thought, if your hostility increases, if you are in contradiction with your brother, knowing that there is no balm in Gilead, or a doctor in the surrounding area (Jeremiah 8:22), fast

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, rule 49.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, rule 51.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, rule 194.

¹⁹ Avva Pachomius urged to constantly resort to the spiritual father's discernment, because it was not a few times that the brothers believed that God's exhortations were in fact from the devil.



refuge in solitude with God's conscience, cry only to you with Christ, and the Spirit of Christ will speak to you, with your thought and it he will convince you of the fullness of the commandment. Why do you have to fight alone, like a beast, as if this venom were inside you?²⁰

On the other hand, within the community, there could be no absolute uniformity, because Avva Pachomius, wisely, wanted every monk to apply monastic rules to his own measure, specific to both the real forces and possibilities and the grace received. Everyone must to be faithful to the chinobite vocation, but to respect at the same time the power of the ascetic life and spiritual growth of other.

According to the teachings of Pious Pachomius, in order to acquire the grace of the Holy Spirit, the purpose of Christian life, it is necessary to have a guard of the heart; and this guard is done by virtues such as fasting, prayer and temperance that bring „peace and rest of temptation” to the body, and, thus, through purity and attention „God will live in us”²¹.

The ideal of monastic life in chinobia is synthesized in a prayer for the monks, preserved in the Coptic variants of *Life of avva Pachomius*:

„God Almighty God, blessed Lord, help us to carry out this work that me and my brothers have begun so that we may be worthy of You, so that You may live in our bodies, in our souls, and in our our spirits, that we may be perfect in love, always walking before You according to Your will, so that we may not sin against You, nor to arouse the Holy Spirit in the name of which we were signified, but instead to be pure and unspoiled

²⁰ Saint PACHOMIUS THE GREAT, *Catechesis about a brother who held a grudge* 58, *apud* Placide DESEILLE / Enzo BIANCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 213-214.

²¹ Saint PACHOMIUS THE GREAT, *Catechesis about a brother who held a grudge* 58, *apud* Placide DESEILLE / Enzo BIANCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 205-206.

before You for all the days of our life and deserve Your heavenly and everlasting kingdom because of Your mercy, a lover of men”²².

3. The rule of the Saint Basil the Great

The relatively short life of Saint Basil the Great (329/30 - 379) and his pastoral activity in Caesarea of Cappadocia lies in the disturbed half century before the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381), a period that is part of the golden age of patristics. From the many sides of the Church's service, here we will refer strictly to the importance of the writings of Saint Basil the Great that were concerned with the monastic organization: Moral Rules, Great Rules and Small Rules²³.

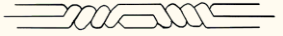
In order to fix his plan for the organization of monastic life and to lay down the rules to be respected for this purpose, Saint Basil the Great himself experienced many different kinds of monastic life. Thus, initially he was attracted by the Bishop Eustacy of the Sevestia, especially because of the practical side of the philanthropic institutions he had founded. But the innovations introduced by Eustacy's followers were condemned in the 21 canons of the Synod of Gangra (340)²⁴.

He was later attracted by the anchorites who follow the orders of Saint Anthony the Great, but especially the ascetics who

²² Louise Theophile LEFORT (ed.), *Sancti Pachomii vitae bohairice scripta* p. 270, apud Placide DESEILLE, Enzo BIANCHI, *op. cit.*, p. 118-119.

²³ The text of these *Rules* can be found in *Migne Patrologiae Graecae*, vol. 31, col. 692-700 (*Moral Rules*), col. 905/906-1051/1052 (*Great Rules*) and col. 1051/1052 - 1077/1078 (*Small Rules*). They were also translated into Romanian: SAINT BASIL THE GREAT, *Writings - Part Two - Ascetics* [col. Parents and Church Writers, vol. 18], translation, introduction, indices and notes by Prof. Iorgu D. Ivan, Bucharest, IBMBOR, 1989.

²⁴ SYNOD OF GANGRA, <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/istoria-bisericii/sinodul-gangra-126033.html> (accessed on 27.08.2018).



followed the kind of public life according to the rules of Saint Pachomius the Great. Comparing the two collections of rules (St. Pachomius the Great and St. Basil the Great), there are many similarities, which reinforces the idea that Saint Basil the Great rules were based on those of Saint Pachomius the Great. After living in Egypt, Saint Basil also arrived in Palestine, where he met the way of life of the anchorites from here. Ending these wanderings and passing through profound personal reflection he succeeded in his *Rules* to make a synthesis to use as the basis of the monastic organization²⁵.

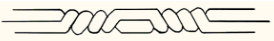
An important help in the formulation of these norms was given by his friend, St. Gregory of Nazianz²⁶.

As a result of his documentation, St. Basil the Great admired the austerity of the eremians, but was categorically in supporting the common way of life. On returning from his trip to Egypt and Palestine he not only puts solitary life in inferiority, but also criticizes even Pachomian cenovitism. So he says he found too much noise in the monasteries, too much work, which aroused the whole activity of the monks. In *The Great Rules*, he

²⁵ *The Great Rules* speak of: about the commandments of God and their order (rule 1), about the supreme commandments of the love of God and neighbor (2-3), about the fear of God (4), about of non-dispersion of the mind as a fundamental condition of Christian living 5), about the solitary life and cenobitic life (6-7), about the renunciation (8-9), about the various people who wish to consecrate to the Lord (10-15) and, in a not very rigorous succession, obedience and various issues specific to cenobitic life (16-55).

The Small Rules, on the other hand, are less structured; there are, however, no definite intentions, such as the first rule that speaks of the normative value of Holy Scripture, or the second rule regarding the authentic confession, and it also explicitly refers to the previously written rule (rule 1). It is also a more homogeneous part (rules 3 to 16 that talk about conversion, not accidentally at the beginning of its collection of rules), but in general there are many spontaneous links between two successive rules.

²⁶ Saint BASIL THE GREAT, *op. cit.*, p. 15, note 14.

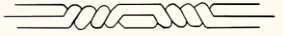


lists the inconveniences of solitary life. Among these dangers, „the first and the worst is self-esteem”²⁷ (*autareskeia*) that leads the monk to God's forgetfulness, which is the root of all sins. In opposition, St. Basil enumerates the advantages of living together: they all help each other, such as the body organs between them, and all contribute to the material needs of the community, which in turn takes care of the spiritual needs of the monk; this who lives in a community will find a spiritual father more easily. In the common life, the gift to each one becomes to everyone, and on the other hand, every one takes advantage of the gifts with which the others are endowed. In common there are frequent encounters in which monks can show their humility, and the clergyman will be less tempted to contemplate to himself. And even if one of the brothers fall into any sin, it is much easier to rise because of the help of the stronger brothers in the faith and the more virtuous²⁸.

If the first vasilian community was born in the mountainous area of Pontus, in an isolated place in the Egyptian desert, the following communities founded by St. Basil the Great were disposed near the villages and even the great cities, such as Caesarea, which was later known as Vasiliada. In most cases, the communities were doubles, both men and women, knowing very shortly an impressive increase in the number of followers. The concrete model of the Basil community was represented by the primitive church in Jerusalem. The remembrance and nostalgia of the first Christian community became by St. Basil the Great the concrete project and the reforming proposal for the whole Church. The reality of the vasilian community was born through a continuous confrontation with the origins.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 231, rule 7.

²⁸ Tomáš ŠPIDLÍK, *op. cit.*, p. 262-263.



Like St. Pachomius the Great at the St. Basil the Great, the accent is put on studying God-inspired Scriptures. The other exhortations were called „rules” by some sixteenth century copywriters, which intervene in the text, but in fact they are *Questions-Answers*, according to a type of writing quite widespread in antiquity. In these *Questions - Answers* are not talking about the „monk” but the term „brother” is used; the word „monastery” is not used, but „brotherhood”, „community” (adelphótes) is used²⁹. The word „brother” knows during the first and third centuries a strong semantic limitation, indicating not just the Christian but only the one who was the clergyman, the priest. St. Basil revitalizes this term, re-establishes its biblical foundations and applies to all Christians who were engaged to live the radicality of the evangelical message in their shared life³⁰.

Of particular importance is the keeping of the mind in a state of tranquility in order to have a prayer as pure as possible; that prayer is good that inspires in the soul the true knowledge of God. In his ascetic writings, St. Basil also refers to detailed matters, which the monk will always have to bear in mind, in order to prove temperance and modesty in the way he dresses and behaves (to be benevolent in conversation, not to do use jokes to be considered agreeable, do not look unkempt or hair unnerved, not to be greedy to eat)³¹.

²⁹ I Peter 2:17: „Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king”.

I Peter 5:9: „Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world”.

³⁰ Lisa CREMASCHI, „The common life according to Basilio” in Sebastia Brock *et alii* (eds.), *Basilio between East and West* [International Conference „Basil the Great and Eastern Monasticism” Cappadocia, October 5 - 7, 1999], Magnano, Qiqajon Edition, 2001, p. 99.

³¹ Saint BASIL THE GREAT, *Writings - Part Two - Ascetic* [col. Parents and Church Writers, vol. 18], p. 18.

The entire ascetic work of St. Basil the Great, considered the father and teacher of the Church, is the basis of the way of organizing the Eastern monasticism. And in the Occident he enjoys a generalized recognition, being promoted immediately after death. Thus, Girolamo in *De viris illustribus* (393) speaks of St. Basil the Great, and Rufin in 397 translates *The Monastic Rules*, naming them *Institutia monachorum*³². Also, St. John Cassian through *De institutis coenobiorum* goes further the St. Basil's principles of monastic life. Even St. Benedict of Nursia, considered the founder of Western monasticism, in his work *Regula monachorum*, written around 540, used as a source the works of St. Basil the Great, translated into Latin by Rufin³³.

4. The franciscan rule

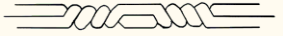
From St. Francis of Assisi there are two variants of monastic rules: the one since 1221 – *Regola non bollata* – unconfirmed by papal authority, but only verbally acknowledged in essence by Pope Innocent III in 1209/1210 and the one since 1223 – *Regola bollata* – confirmed by the papal bull „Solet annuere” since 29th November 1223, by Pope Honorus III³⁴. Both of them are small writings, through which St. Francis regulates the essential aspects of living together³⁵. The difference between

³² Constantin VOICU, *Patrology*, vol. II, Bucharest, Basilica Publishing House of the Romanian Patriarchate, 2009, p. 338.

³³ Idem, vol. III, Bucharest, Basilica Publishing House of the Romanian Patriarchate, 2010, p. 160.

³⁴ HONORIUS III, *Solet annuere*, available at <http://www.franciscanarchive.org/bullarium/La%20Regola%20Bollata-A4.pdf> (accessed on 28.08.2018). The original of this *Rule* is kept at Assisi. Also, a copy considered authentic is kept in the Vatican archive.

³⁵ It should be noted, on the one hand, that Franciscan style does not put the problem of anachoretic living, on the other hand that St. Francis did not think his way of living as a monastic order separate from the Church.



the two rules lies in the fact that the first one reflects more faithfully the original Franciscan spirit, and in the latter one observes the influence of the papal curia³⁶. *The confirmed rule* appears to us as a summary of the previous one.

Even though it has some new aspects, it is much more restricted as a stretch. In the *Unconfirmed Rule*, St. Francis gave a great importance to the spiritual exhortations for observing the imposed rules, and himself underlined and reminded why the laws had to be fulfilled. This feature is not present in the official version of 1223. In similar circumstances to both rules, *The Confirmed Rule* concentrates the assertions in a short and concise manner, leaving the impression that the one who wrote it was preoccupied not to repeat anything twice. Perhaps for the same reason the text of Holy Scripture is quoted much less.

The second, on which we will stop, is divided into 12 chapters.

The analysis of the Saint Francis Rules shows from the beginning its dependence on the Scripture, similar in this respect to the oriental rules dealt with above, that of St. Pachomius the Great and that of St. Basil the Great³⁷. It is confirmed from the first chapter, besides the necessity of following the evangelical message, the three classic monastic votes, also present in the Oriental spirituality: obedience, free will and virginity as well as

Moreover, in Franciscan language the term „brother” used, instead of the term „monk”.

³⁶ *** *Introduction to the Franciscan Rule. Contributions and studies on the Rule of St. Francis by the German Minor Brothers*, Italian translation by R. Mazzarol, Milan, Edizioni Francescane Cammino, 1969, p. 109-110.

³⁷ Chapter I of *Regola Bollata* says: „The rule and life of the minor brothers is: to follow the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience, with nothing in his own and in chastity. Brother Francis promises obedience and submission to Pope Honorius, his successors elected in canonic mode and to the Roman Church. And the other brothers should be forced to obey Brother Francis and his successors”.

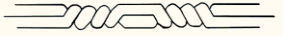
obedience to the church authority. It was for the first time in the history of the Western Church when a religious order was so categorically bound to an absolute obedience to the divine authority established in the Church. This is important because, through obedience to the church hierarchy, the monastic order was safe from slipping into heresy. Like the general minister of the order, as the head of the community, he was obliged to obey and submission to the Pope, so the minor brothers were obliged to obey to brother Francis and his successors. The general minister (the abbot of Oriental spirituality) is the direct representative of the Church for the minor brothers in the community: in his person they listen to church authority and on the basis of this obedience all are subjected to the will of the Church³⁸. Therefore, life according to the Gospel and life in total submission to the church hierarchy are two substantial and inseparable elements.

The second chapter, which shows how to receive those who wish to embrace this path, finds its parallel text in the Rule 49 of St. Pachomius the Great 49 or in *The Great Rules* of St. Basil the Great (10-15). Mention is made of the required probationary year³⁹ before being fully received in the community, reminding that „they will not be allowed to leave this religious family in any way”⁴⁰ by referring to the evangelical text: „whoever holds the hand on the plow and looking back is not worthy of the kingdom of God”.(Luke 9: 62).

³⁸ *** *Introduction to the Franciscan Rule*, p. 119.

³⁹ This year of probation was compulsory introduced by Pope Honorius III through the papal bull *Cum secundum* since 22th September 1220.

⁴⁰ OLGATI, Feliciano *et alii* (eds. / coord.), *Franciscan sources. Writings and biographies of St. Francis of Assisi. Chronicles and other testimonies of the first Franciscan century. Writings and biographies of St. Chiara of Assisi* [Fonti Francescane. Scritti e biografie di san Francesco d'Assisi. Cronache e altre testimonianze del primo secolo francescano. Scritti e biografie di santa Chiara d'Assisi.], Padova, Messaggero Editions, 1982, p. 124.



The third chapter highlights the brother's duties in prayer and fasting, remembering that the Lord Himself sanctified the fast through His fast (Matthew 4: 2)⁴¹. From the mention that it can be tasted of all the foods kind, when they are not in one of the fastings, you can see the analogy with the great rule number 18 of St. Basil the Great.

Chapters 4 to 6 refer very briefly to the vote of free will (the brothers do not receive money or fortunes, about how to work, the brethren do not acquire anything, but live like „strangers and pilgrims” - I Peter 2: 11)⁴².

In the seventh chapter, we find the urge to continually seek repentance, especially when „deadly” sins have been committed, and the cultivation of love among the brothers through the wrath of anger and disorder. A distinction is made in this place between Provincial ministers who are priests and they can give away sins, and those who are not priests should guide the penitentiaries to the priests of the Order⁴³.

The eighth chapter is strictly organizational, he is talking about the election of the General ministry of the Fraternity and the Pentecostal chapter.

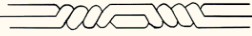
A specific Franciscan quality is debated in the ninth chapter, where are remembered the conditions in which the brothers can preach. Concerning the preach, the words, few in number, must be „weighted” and „pure” for the benefit and edification of the people⁴⁴.

⁴¹ „And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred”.

⁴² „Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”.

⁴³ In the Orthodox tradition there is also the difference between the clergy abbot and the abbot who can only be a monk.

⁴⁴ Romans 9: 27-28: „Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.



The tenth chapter, named „About the rebuke and straightening of brothers”, finds its echo in the great rules 25-31, 43 and 50-52 of St. Basil the Great. St. Francis sets the next condition of accepting all the obedience commanded by superiors: „as long as they are not contrary to their soul and our *Rule*”. Ministers must be the servants of all the brothers; all of them to shy away from conceit, proud pride, envy, avarice⁴⁵, worries and concerns of this world⁴⁶, evil speech and murmuring.

A particular aspect is the exhortation from the same chapter addressed to those who are ignorant of learning: „And those who do not know to learn do not seek to teach, but rather take care of what they must desire: to acquire the Spirit of the Lord and His holy work, to pray ... ” In this place, St. Francis's *Rule* is different from the Oriental Rules that emphasize the practice of reading as many Scripture texts as possible⁴⁷.

The penultimate chapter strongly orders to the brothers not to enter the monasteries of the nuns, not to have women's ties or conversations that could raise suspicions; not to be baptismal godfather for men or women⁴⁸.

For he will finish the work, *and cut it short in righteousness*: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth”.

Psalms 11: 6: „The words of the Lord, *clean words*, silver waxed in fire, cleansed of the earth, cleansed seven times”.

Psalms 17: 3: „My God, righteousness is His way, *the words of the Lord in the fire set clean*; shield is for all those who hope in Him”.

⁴⁵ Luke 12, 15: „Watch out! Guard yourself against all kinds of greed. After all, one's life isn't determined by one's possessions, even when someone is very wealthy”.

⁴⁶ Matthew 13, 22: „As for the seed that was spread among thorny plants, this refers to those who hear the word, but the worries of this life and the false appeal of wealth choke the word, and it bears no fruit”.

⁴⁷ See note 13 above.

⁴⁸ The text of this chapter is comparable to *The Great Rule number 33* of St. Basil the Great.



The last chapter speaks about the brothers who want to be missionaries of the order between saracens and other unbelievers, saying that this mission can be done only with the permission of the superiors. Also in this chapter reference is made to the protector and guide of this fraternity who must be from the cardinals of the Roman Church⁴⁹.

5. Conclusion

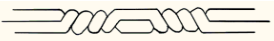
The three monastic rules analyzed have in common the fact that they rely on the Holy Gospel and the Scripture, they speak of how the brothers must be received at the monastery, make references to the practice of virtues, the three monastic votes (free will, obedience and virginity), how to reporting to nuns.

Even though St. Francis was not a man of a vast culture, we can assume that he was aware of the Rules of St. Basil the Great in Latin translate by Rufin, directly, or of his main ideas indirectly transmitted by St. John Cassian and even by St. Benedict of Nursia.

The one who claimed for the first time the influence of St. Basil the Great in *The Franciscan Rule* was Angelo Clareno⁵⁰, the main exponent of the spiritual Franciscans, exiled for a long time in Greece. In his work *Commento alla Regola* he quotes St. Basil the Great very often, putting him in analogy with St. Francis: in explaining the term „minores” in connection with

⁴⁹ „I impose the ministers, under obedience, to ask the Pope like one of the cardinals of the Roman Church to be governor, protector and guide to this fraternity, that always obedient and submission to the feet of the same Holy Church, unshaken in the Catholic faith, to preserve poverty, humility and the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as I strongly promised”.

⁵⁰ Information about Angelo Clareno (1255-1337) and his concern for Greek works of Oriental Fathers are found at Silvestru BEJAN, *Saint Francis of Assisi in the rewriting of some Orthodox circles*, Padova, Messaggero Editions, 2007, p. 10-18.



evangelical counseling (especially poverty), in the caution with which must be accept the brothers at the monastery, report to work, explain the cenobitic way of life, serve the superior of the monastery, in the quarreling and correction of the brothers, in the relations of brothers with the nuns monastery.

Starting from the historical truth that during the period when St. Francis lived, Basilian monasticism was still flourishing in central and meridional Italy, a franciscan erudite says:

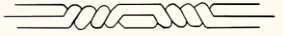
„The Franciscan origins have precise points of reference in the ascetic practice by the Saint Nil of Rossano and the multitude of greek monks in the famous Mercurion diocese, situated in the north-western extremity of Calabria, at the confluence of the Greek world with the Latin world. St. Francis, who knew the St. Basil's monastic law, knew his practical implementation in the hermitages and monasteries of Calabria”⁵¹.

Unlike him, Yannis Spiteris, the Catholic archbishop of Corfu, believes that it is more prudent to say that St. Francis „might have known Oriental legislation and monasticism”⁵², this possibility deriving from the fact that the main ancient rules of monasticism were translated into Latin and were frequently found in monasteries. In this way he could have known, for example, the writings and the monastic rule of St. Pachomius the Great, translated in Latin by Girolamo as well as a part of *The Monastic Rules* of St. Basil the Great translated by Rufin:

„The first Latin Rules contain the essential principles of monasticism: the connection of all precepts with the two commandments of love to God and to the neighbor; the search for a permanent contact with God in the run away from the world's

⁵¹ Francesco RUSSO, *Franciscan Minor Conventuals in Calabria*, Catanzaro, edited by Silipo e Lucia, 1982, p. 16.

⁵² Yannis SPITERIS, *Franciscan and the Christian Orient. A comparison*, Rome, Historical Institute of the Capuchins Edition, 1999, p. 239-240.



agitation and the peace of loneliness, tempered by the life lived with the brothers pursuing the same purpose; the imitation of Christ, which is attempted to be accomplished by renouncing the family through virginity, to the earthly goods through poverty and to himself through obedience”⁵³.

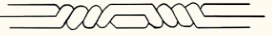
Under these circumstances, it is worth bearing in mind the affirmation of historian Benoît Gain: „The unic spirit of Christ spoke by saints of different vocations”⁵⁴.

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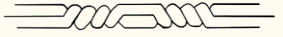
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⁵⁴ Benoît GAIN, „Basil's influence on Angelo Clareno” in *** *Basilio between East and West* [International Conference "Basil the Great and Eastern monasticism" Cappadocia, 5th - 7th October 1999], Magnano, Qiqajon Editions, 2001, p. 247.



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