

February 7

ON SAINT ROMUALD

105.1 First Point

Saint Romuald lived in the world for twenty years, which seemed very long to him because all he found there was misery and reasons for leaving it. He then lived a hundred years in solitude, which seemed very short to him because of the consolations God gave him to enjoy during all that period. Saint Lawrence Justinian says that if the world knew the pleasure found in seclusion, cities would become deserts, and deserts would soon be peopled.

If you wish to live happily, love seclusion. The more you keep away from the burden of the world, the more you will have peace of mind and conscience. How happy we are when we keep our mind detached from everything and our conscience pure and clean. The less we have to do with people of the world, the more fully we will possess this advantage.

105.2 Second Point

It is admirable that Saint Romuald, who lived for 120 years, spent 100 of them in very great austerities, wearing a hair shirt, and eating only three times a week a bit of bread and some beans, and drinking only water. After that, who will dare say that austerities shorten life? Several saints lived very austere lives and yet lived much longer than most other people.

But even if austerities do shorten our days, they procure for us a great benefit by purifying both soul and body, for they weaken our passions and deliver the body from all corruption.

105.3 Third Point

After living for 100 years in solitude, and having led a very penitential life, this saint said that the more he thought of death the more he feared not dying well. This was because he knew that God will require such an exact account on the Day of Judgment that the just themselves will scarcely be saved.⁵⁶⁴ According to the words of the Prophet, God will judge justice itself.⁵⁶⁵

If this saint so deeply feared the judgment of God, how fearful you should be if, perhaps, you are spending your life in neglect of the duties of your state? If, then, you wish to avoid the rigors of God's judgments and die with peace of mind, be yourselves the judges of your actions in advance⁵⁶⁶ during your life; condemn and punish everything in you which may displease God.

Romuald (ca 950 - 1027) was born at Ravenna of a noble family.

His father quarreled with a relative and killed him in a duel. Romuald was so shocked by this that he entered a Benedictine monastery to do forty days of penance. This led to his joining the monks, but some bad example among them led in turn to his becoming a hermit. Eventually he founded the Camaldolese, an order that combines both the community life and the hermitic life. De La Salle's belief that Romuald lived to be 120 years old is not accepted today. February 7 is the day his body was transferred to Fabriano, Italy. His feast is now celebrated on June 19.

564 1 Pt 4:18

565 Ps 75:3

566 1 Cor 11:31