

## **Rule for the Companions of New Skete**

### **The Purpose of the Companions**

The Companions of New Skete is a fellowship of lay people who seek to be formally connected with the New Skete Communities in order to deepen their spiritual lives. Through their connection with New Skete they look to incorporate monastic values that help them live out the call of the Gospel in a lay setting at the same time as helping to support New Skete in its mission.

### **A Covenant of Prayer**

Above all, prayer binds the Companions with the Monks and Nuns of New Skete. Each group vows to support each other in prayer, praying for one another each day. The Companions pray specifically that the Monks and Nuns may be faithful to their vocation while the monastics pledge to use their resources to help the Companions grow as men and women of prayer and service and to remember them in the daily services.

### **The Place of Worship**

Liturgical worship has always been at the heart of New Skete's spirituality and each monk and nun recognizes its centrality in a healthy spiritual life. We envision our Companions to be committed members of a worshipping community of their choice in a manner that strengthens the Body of Christ and is a tangible sign of their faith.

### **The Liturgical Year**

New Skete recognizes the liturgical year of the Church to be a graced means of entering more deeply into the mystery of Christ. It provides a wise structure for praying with the Church and so Companions will take advantage of the seasonal opportunities, particularly during Great Lent, the Paschal period, and the pre-Christmas season, for deepening their consciousness of being members of the praying Church.

### **Personal Prayer**

God invites each of us to develop a dedicated rhythm of personal prayer. While the ways each of us prays in secret will vary according to personal attraction, available time and lifestyle, the human heart longs to develop a prayer life that encompasses the whole of life, and which expresses itself in the varied situations of daily life. This is what unceasing prayer involves for all Christians, not just monastics. Members of the Companions dedicate themselves to developing a disciplined life of prayerfulness that makes time each day for personal prayer, whether through lectio divina, contemplative prayer, or praying some form of the daily services. For its part, the monastic communities pledge to be a resource for assisting the Companions in finding their own personal rhythm of prayer.

### **Continuing Education**

The desire to grow in wisdom and understanding of God's mystery is itself a witness to God's grace in our lives. Part of being a Companion of New Skete will involve regular reading and study that sensitizes us to the vastness of God's mystery and a deepening understanding of our Christian faith. However we share the fruits of this study (i.e. in preaching, writing, ministry, or in friendships and relationships), first and foremost study is meant to enrich our relationship with God and Companions make it an integral part of their spiritual practice.

### **Retreat Times**

In order to be open to deeper levels of God's mystery that lead to a fuller relationship, dedicated times of retreat are invaluable; they bring spiritual focus and dedicated concentration without the ordinary demands of daily living. As part of their rule of life, we urge Companions to schedule a yearly three-day retreat either at New Skete or some other suitable monastery or retreat center. When this is not possible, Companions will set aside periodic "quiet" days to devote themselves to a more intense practice of prayer, reading, and reflection.

### **Personal Care**

Human beings are a composite of body, mind, and spirit and we experience the work of the Spirit on each of these levels. Our health affects us as individuals, which in turn affects the communities to which we belong. Understanding spirituality as holistic; body, mind and spirit, Companions will exercise stewardship over their health.

### **Spiritual Direction and Confession**

The Wisdom of our tradition has recognized that each one of us needs periodically to meet with an experienced guide in order to grow as God intends. While the frequency and nature of this will vary from individual to individual, Companions look to take advantage of the resources of spiritual direction and sacramental confession (when part of their tradition) as components of their spiritual practice. When confession is not possible, Companions will use a "quiet" day for a thorough review of life once every six months and bring that to their prayer.

### **A Generous Heart**

The further we move in the life of the Spirit, the more we recognize that we are the beneficiaries of God's boundless graces, and this elicits a desire to respond in gratitude. As their life circumstances allow Companions look to share their time, talents, and financial gifts in support of the Church, the poor, and the work of our monastic communities. Their vocation is to be leaven in the world. They work to keep their lives simple, avoiding extravagance and waste and to exercise responsible stewardship with their resources.

### **Connections with Others**

During his earthly ministry, Jesus revealed himself as a man for others who at the same time showed us what God is like. He demonstrated a striking concern for those he encountered and made clear by his actions the importance of relationships in human life. Learning from the example of Jesus, Companions recognize the importance of fostering and maintaining healthy relationships in their lives, devoting time and energy especially with those friends, family members, and spouses they are committed to in a special way.