



## ACETICAL THEOLOGY

What does *Regula Vitae* mean?

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REGULA VITAE IS A LATIN PHRASE that, translated into English, means “a rule of life.” The meaning of the phrase, “a rule of life,” is one that every Christian ought to consider at some point. While studying this phrase, and what it has to do with us, it is helpful to understand that our English word, *regular*, is derived from the Latin word, *regula*.

Essentially, a “rule of life” is a private “rule” of prayer; that is to say, it is a thoughtful, personal, and conscious lifestyle that encourages one to grow closer to God and to become more and more like Him through a *regular* devotional life. To put it another way, to have a “rule” is to be a “regular” Christian, and to be a “regular” Christian is to be “... one who embraces the Christian life as opposed to the keen ‘draftee’ who goes to Church fairly often and tries to say his prayers now and again.”

According to The Rev'd Martin Thornton, an Anglican priest and author of *Christian Proficiency*, “A Christian regular is one who chooses to undertake his common obligations and duties, and to develop his personal spirituality, by acknowledging, accepting or ‘embracing’ some total scheme, system, pattern or ‘rule’ of prayer.” From this definition of what it means to be a “regular” Christian, we can see that being “regular,” that is, being a Christian who lives by a “rule,” is a matter of choice. To be a “regular” Christian is to choose to live a thought-out and intentional life of devotion.

As individuals, each of us should have our own “rule of life.” This is because a rule of life is not something that comes to the Christian as a one-size-fits-all. In fact, as our lives change, so should our rule. As Thornton says, “[A rule of life] should ‘fit,’ and the soul should ‘grow into it,’ so that by habitual use prayer fully becomes a solidly established part of life and personality—and this is the real meaning of the word *regular*.”

such as Benediction, took hold in the 12th century and were formalized by the 15th. Father John Mason Neale, an Anglican priest and expert on Eastern Orthodoxy, reintroduced Benediction into the Church of England by providing it for his sisterhood, the Society of Saint Margaret. Father Neale was no Romanist, quite the opposite — he offered Benediction because he saw it as the logical devotional outgrowth of the whole Church’s doctrine of the Real Presence. Extraliturgical devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is NOT unknown to the Orthodox East — this claim is often asserted and is historically incorrect. The Orthodox Church has a service called the Canon of Supplication to Our Lord Jesus Christ, a prayer service offered to Our Lord in the artophorion, the tabernacle upon the Altar. Eastern Christians, both Orthodox and Uniate, have a form of Benediction which involves the blessing of the people with ‘the Lamb,’ the consecrated Host.

Eucharistic devotions and adoration are not deep, dank, dark Romanism — They are a legacy and inheritance of the whole Undivided Church and her faith in the

Real Objective Presence of her living Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

Dr. Alexander Roman, a Ukrainian Orthodox scholar, writes: The adoration of Christ in Holy Communion is first of all, something that the Orthodox Church truly DOES participate in, but within the context of the Divine Liturgy itself. We adore Christ Who is truly Present on the Altar following the Epiclesis, the culminating point that completes the Eucharistic Canon during which bread and wine become the Body and Blood of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We bow down before the Incarnate Word of God and adore Him — absolutely! We prepare zealously for the reception of Him in Holy Communion by fasting and the long prayers of preparation, as you know, and of thanksgiving afterward. Upon receiving our Saviour-God in Holy Communion, we kiss the edge of the Chalice that represents the Wounded Side of Christ from which flowed Blood and Water as we are nourished from that Same Side.

