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The Desert Fathers were the first Christian monks, living in solitude in the deserts of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. In contrast to the formalized and official theology of the "founding fathers" of the Church, they were ordinary Christians who chose to renounce the world and live lives of celibacy, fasting, vigil, prayer, and poverty in direct and simple response to the gospel. First recorded in the fourth century, their Sayings consisting of spiritual advice, anecdotes, parables, and reflections on life influenced the rule of St. Benedict, set the pattern for Western monasticism, and have inspired centuries of poetry, opera, and art. Organized around key themes Charity, Fortitude, Lust, Patience, Prayer, Self-control, and Vision this edition of the Sayings is fresh, accessible, and authoritative. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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