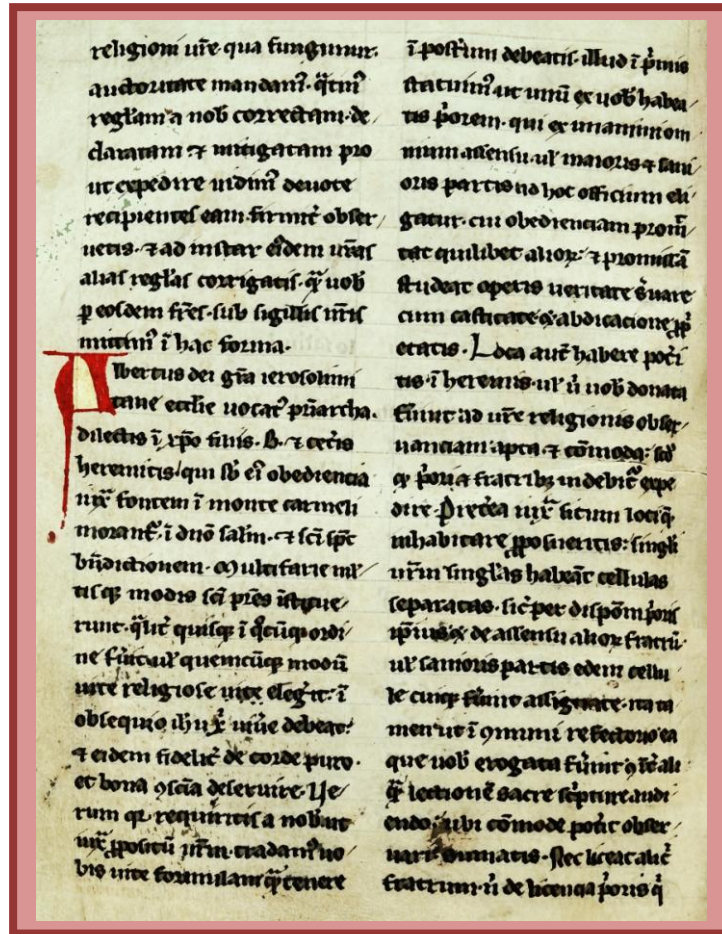


The Rule of Saint Albert

—the Revisions of Pope Innocent IV in 1247



Albert of Vercelli, Patriarch of Jerusalem, gave the Latin Hermits on Mount Carmel a *Formula Vitae*, a Rule-like charter that outlined a simple way of life for them to follow in their hermitages scattered through a remote mountain valley on the slopes of Carmel. They were lay hermits, not monks or Religious, and so he did not give them a canonical Rule. (The Latin word for Rule is *Regula*, and those who follow a *Regula* are Regulars or Religious.) But much happened in the years subsequent to Albert's *Formula Vitae*. The colony grew and after 1238 groups began returning to Europe and making foundations near cities such as Messina in Sicily, Pisa, Marseilles, and Paris. In England they took over a busy pilgrim hostel on the road from London to Canterbury at Aylesford. At the same time, the Church hierarchy was pressuring Lay Hermits to become canonical Religious

and Orders such as the Franciscans, Augustinian Hermits, Hermits of Saint Paul, and the Servites began to form from previously lay groups. The Hermit Brothers of Our Lady from Mount Carmel also felt this pressure. Moreover, the mendicant lifestyle adopted by the Franciscans and Dominicans attracted them to leave their hermitages and take up ministries among the urban population. At a General Chapter held at Aylesford in England it was decided to send delegates to the Holy See to petition for some modifications to the *Formula Vitae* which Albert had written and in October of 1247 Pope Innocent IV issued a revised edition of Albert's charter that had been modified by Papal Delegates, the Dominican Cardinal Hugh of Saint Sabina and the Dominican Bishop, William of Tortosa.



The modifications seem at first to be rather slight. Most of Albert's text remained unchanged. The hermits—now friars—are to eat in a common refectory. They are to recite the Canonical Hours together rather than pray the psalms individually. The vows of chastity and renunciation of property are added to that of obedience—a requirement since they are now religious. And, as they are religious, the *Formula Vitae*, though still called a *Formula Vitae*, is officially a *Regula* (Rule). An ambiguous passage in the revised text seems to give permission to establish houses in the cities as well as maintaining rural hermitages. There is some leeway in adding meat to their diet while they are travelling. They are allowed beasts of burden. While they changes seem small, they are in fact monumental for the Carmelites are now Religious. More and more are being ordained and the ministries of preaching and hearing confessions will become increasingly important. The needs of public ministry will soon impel them to send their men to the universities to study theology. Priestly and academic ministries will replace manual labor for many of them. And the hustle-bustle of urban life and the demands of the laity for priestly ministry will tempt them away from contemplative life. Below is an English translation of the revised Rule and beneath that is an annotated edition of the Latin Text.

The Rule of St. Albert

Revised by Pope Innocent IV

[Chapter 1]

Albert, called by God's favor to be Patriarch of the Church of Jerusalem, bids health in the Lord and the blessing of the Holy Spirit to his beloved sons in Christ, B. and the other hermits under obedience to him, who live near the spring on Mount Carmel.

[Chapter 2]

Many and varied are the ways in which our saintly forefathers laid down how everyone, whatever one's place in the Church or the kind of religious observance one has chosen, should live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ -- how, pure in heart and stout in conscience, he must be unswerving in the service of his Master.

[Chapter 3]

It is to me, however, that you have come for a pattern for life in keeping with your proposal, a pattern for life you may hold fast to henceforward; and therefore:

[Chapter 4]

The first thing I require is for you to have a prior, one of yourselves, who is to be chosen for the office by the unanimous assent, or that of the greater and wiser part of you; each of the others must promise him obedience -- of which, once promised, he must try to make his deeds the true reflection -- *and also chastity and the renunciation of ownership.*

[Chapter 5]

If the prior and brothers see fit, you may have foundations in solitary places, or where you are given a site that is suitable and convenient for the observance proper to your Order.

[Chapter 6]

Next, each one of you is to have a separate cell, situated as the lie of the land you propose to occupy may dictate, and allotted by disposition of the prior with the agreement of the other brothers, or the wiser among them.

[Chapter 7]

However, you are to eat whatever may have been given you in a common refectory, listening together meanwhile to a reading from Holy Scripture where that can be done without difficulty.

[Chapter 8]

None of the brothers is to occupy a cell other than that allotted to him or to exchange cells with another, without leave or whoever is prior at the time.

[Chapter 9]

The prior's cell should stand near the entrance to your property, so that he may be the first to meet those who approach, and whatever has to be done in consequence may all be carried out as he may decide and order.

[Chapter 10]

Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord's law day and night and keeping vigil at his prayers unless attending to some other duty.

[Chapter 11]

Those who know how to say the canonical hours with those in orders should do so, in the way those holy forefathers of ours laid down, and according to the Church's approved custom. Those who do not know the hours must say twenty-five Our Fathers for the night office, except on Sundays and solemnities when that number is to be doubled so that the Our Father is said fifty times; the same prayer must be said seven times in the morning in place of Lauds, and seven times too for each of the other hours, except for Vespers when it must be said fifteen times.

[Chapter 12]

None of the brothers must lay claim to anything as his own, but you are to possess everything in common; and each is to receive from the prior -- that is from the brother he appoints for the purpose -- whatever befits his age and needs.

[Chapter 13]

You may have as many asses and mules as you need, however, and may keep a certain amount of livestock or poultry.

[Chapter 14]

Let an oratory, as commodious as it able to be made, be constructed among the cells, where, if it can be done without difficulty, you are to gather each morning for the solemn hearing of masses.

[Chapter 15]

On Sundays too, or other days if necessary, you should discuss matters of the community welfare as well as the salvation of your souls; and on this occasion the indiscretions and failings of the members of the community, if any be found at fault, should be corrected in due charity.

[Chapter 16]

You are to fast every day, except Sundays, from the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross until the Sunday of the Resurrection, unless bodily sickness or feebleness, or some other good reason demand a dispensation from the fast.

[Chapter 17]

You are to abstain from meat, except as a remedy for sickness or feebleness. *But as, when you are on a journey, you more often than not have to beg your way; outside your own houses you may eat foodstuffs that have been cooked with meat, so as to avoid giving trouble to your hosts. At sea, however, meat may be eaten.*

[Chapter 18]

Since man's life on earth is a time of trial, and all who would live devotedly in Christ must undergo persecution, and the devil your foe is on the prowl like a roaring lion looking for prey to devour, you must use every care to clothe yourselves in God's armor so that you may be ready to withstand the enemy's ambush.

[Chapter 19]

Your loins are to be girt with chastity, your breast fortified by holy meditations, for, as Scripture has it, holy meditation will save you. Put on holiness as your breastplate, and it will enable you to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Faith must be your shield on all occasions, and with it you will be able to quench all the

flaming missiles of the wicked one: there can be no pleasing God without faith; [and the victory lies in this -- your faith]. On your head set the helmet of salvation, and so be sure of deliverance by our only Savior, who sets his own free from their sins. The sword of the spirit, the word of God, must abound in your mouths and hearts. Let all you do have the Lord's word for accompaniment.

[Chapter 20]

You must give yourselves to work of some kind, so that the devil may always find you busy; no idleness on your part must give him a chance to pierce the defenses of your souls. In this respect you have both the teaching and the example of Saint Paul the Apostle, into whose mouth Christ put his own words. God made him preacher and teacher of faith and truth to the nations: with him as your leader you cannot go astray. "We lived among you," he said, "laboring and wary, toiling night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you; not because we had no power to do otherwise but so as to give you, in your own selves, an example you might imitate. For the charge we gave you when we were with you was this: that whoever is not willing to work should not be allowed to eat either. For we have heard that there are certain restless idlers among you. We charge people of this kind, and implore them in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they earn their own bread by silent toil." *This is the way of holiness and goodness: see that you follow it.*

[Chapter 21]

The Apostle would have us keep silence, for in silence he tells us to work. As the Prophet also makes known to us: Silence is the way to foster holiness. Elsewhere he says: Your strength will lie in silence and hope. For this reason I lay down that you are to keep silence from after Compline until after Prime the next day. At other times, although you need not keep silence so strictly, be careful not to indulge in a great deal of talk, for, as Scripture has it -- and experience teaches us no less -- sin will not be wanting where there is much talk, and he who is careless in speech will come to harm; and elsewhere: The use of many words brings harm to the speaker's soul. And our Lord says in the Gospel: Every rash word uttered will have to be accounted for on judgment day. Make a balance then, each of you, to weigh his words in; keep a tight rein on your mouths, lest you should stumble and fall in speech, and your fall be irreparable and prove mortal. Like the Prophet, watch your step lest your tongue give offence, and employ every care in keeping silent, which is the way to foster holiness.

[Chapter 22]

You, brother B., and whoever may succeed you as prior, must always keep in mind and put into practice what our Lord said in the Gospel: Whoever has a mind to become a leader among you must make himself servant to the rest, and whichever of you would be first must become your bondsman.

[Chapter 23]

You, other brothers too, hold your prior in humble reverence, your minds not on him but on Christ who has placed him over you, and who, to those who rule the Churches, addressed the words: Whoever pays you heed pays heed to me, and whoever treats you with dishonour dishonours me; if you remain so minded you will not be found guilty of contempt, but will merit life eternal as fit reward for your obedience.

[Chapter 24]

Here then are the few points I have written down to provide you with a standard of conduct to live up to; but our Lord, at his second coming will reward anyone who does more than he is obliged to do. See that the bounds of common sense are not exceeded, however, for common sense is the guide of the virtues.

REGULA "PRIMITIVA"
ORDINIS BEATISSIMAE VIRGINIS MARIAE DE MONTE CARMELO
A BEATO ALBERTO
PATRIARCHA HIERSOLYMITANO TRADITA
ET AB INNOCENTIO IV
CONFIRMATA¹

Albertus, Dei gratia Hierosolymitanae Ecclesiae vocatus Patriarcha, dilectis in Christo fillis B² et caeteris Eremitis qui sub eius oboedientia iuxta fontem Eliae³ in monte Carmeli morantur, in Domino salutem et Sancti Spiritus benedictionem.

Multifarie multisque modis⁴ sancti Patres instituerunt qualiter quisque, in quocumque Ordine fuerit, vel quemcumque modum religiosae vitae elegerit, in obsequio Iesu Christi⁵ vivere debeat, et eidem fideliter de corde puro et bona conscientia⁶ deservire. Verum, quia requiritis a nobis, ut iuxta propositum vestrum tradamus vobis vitae formulam, quam tenere in posterum debeatis:

De Priore habendo et tribus sibi promittendis

Illud in primis statuimus, ut unum ex vobis habeatis Priorem, qui ex unanimitate omnium assensu, vel maioris et sanioris partis, ad hoc officium eligatur, cui oboedientiam promittat quilibet aliorum, et promissam studeat operis veritate⁷ servare, cum castitate et abdicatione proprietatis.

De receptione locorum

¹ Regula, Carmelitis a S. Alberto, patriarcha Hierosolymitano, inter annos 1206 et 1214 data, ab Honorio III d. 30.1.1226 primum, et deinde a Gregorio IX d. 6.IV.1229 et ab Innocentio IV d. 8.VI.1245 approbate, ab eodem Innocentio IV d. 1.X.1247 confirmata est. Textum, prout exstat in bulla Quae honorem Conditoris (Reg. Vatic. 21 ff. 465V466r), hic transcribimus, moderno tamen scribendi modo inducto.

Inter uncas loci Sacrae Scripturae necnon tituli indicantur qui in textu originali desiderantur.

² Registrum Vaticanum et antiquiores codices simpliciter litteram B. praebent, quam posteriori tempore Brocardo fratres interpretati sunt.

³ Hic etiam Registrum Vaticanum habet simpliciter « iuxta fontem ». Nomen Eliae posteriori tempore additum est.

⁴ cfr. Hb 1, 1

⁵ cfr. 2 Cor 10, 5

⁶ I Tm 1, 5

⁷ cfr. I Io 3, 18

*Loca autem habere poteritis in Eremitis vel ubi vobis donata fuerint, ad vestrae Religio-
nis observantiam apta et commode, secundum quod Priori et Fratribus videbitur expe-
dire.*

De cellis fratrum

*Praeterea, iuxta situm loci quem inhabitare proposueritis, singuli vestrum singulas
habeant cellulas separatas, sicut per dispositionem Prioris ipsius, et de assensu aliorum
Fratrum, vel sanioris partis, eadem cellulae cuique fuerint assignatae.*

De communi refectioe

*Ita tamen, ut in communi refectorio ea quae vobis erogata fuerint, communiter ali-
quam lectionem sacrae Scripturae audiendo, ubi commode poterit observari, sumatis.*

De prioris potestate

*Nec liceat alicui Fratrum, nisi de licentia Prioris, qui pro tempore fuerit, deputatum
sibi mutare locum, vel cum alio permutare. Cellula Prioris sit iuxta introitum loci, ut
venientibus ad eundem locum primus occurrat, et de arbitrio et de dispositione ipsius
postmodum quae agenda sunt cuncta procedant.*

De iugi oratione

Maneant singuli in cellulis suis, vel iuxta eas, die ac nocte in lege Domini
meditantes⁸, et in orationibus vigilantes⁹, nisi aliis iustis occasionibus occu-
pentur.

De Horis Canonicis

*Hi, qui Horas Canonicas cum Clericis dicere norunt, eas dicant secundum constitutio-
nem sacrorum Patrum et Ecclesiae approbatam consuetudinem. Qui eas non noverunt,
viginti quinque vicibus Pater Noster dicant in nocturnis vigiliis, exceptis Dominicis et
sollemnibus diebus, in quorum vigiliis praedictum numerum statuimus duplicari, ut
dicatur Pater Noster vicibus quinquaginta. Septies autem eadem dicatur Oratio in
Laudibus Matutinis. In aliis quoque Horis septies similiter eadem sigillatim dicatur
oratio, praeter officia Vespertina, in quibus ipsam quindecies dicere debeatis.*

De non habendo proprium

Nullus Fratrum aliquid esse sibi proprium dicat; sed sint vobis omnia com-
munia¹⁰, et distribuantur unicuique per manum Prioris, id est per Fratrem ab
eodem ad idem officium deputatum, prout cuique opus erit¹¹, inspectis aeta-
tibus et necessitatibus singulorum.

Quod licet habere in communi

Asinos autem sive mulos, prout vestra expostulaverit ne-cessitas, vobis ha-
bere liceat; et aliquod animalium sive volatilium nutrimentum.

De oratorio et cultu divino

⁸ cfr. Ps 1, 2; Ios 1, 8,

⁹ cfr. I Pt 4, 7

¹⁰ cfr. Act 4, 32; 2, 44

¹¹ cfr. Act 4, 35

Oratorium, prout commodius fieri poterit, construatur in medio cellularum, ubi mane per singulos dies ad audienda Missarum sollemnia convenire debeat, ubi hoc commode fieri potest.

De Capitulo et correctione Fratrum

Dominicis quoque diebus vel aliis, ubi opus fuerit, de custodia Ordinis et animarum salute tractetis; ubi etiam excessus et culpa Fratrum, si quae in aliquo deprehensae fuerint, caritate media corrigantur.

De ieiunio Fratrum

Ieiunium singulis diebus, exceptis Dominicis, observetis a festo Exaltationis sanctae Crucis usque ad diem Dominicae Resurrectionis, nisi infirmitas vel debilitas corporis aut alla iusta cause ieiunium solvi suadeat, quia necessitas non habet legem.

De abstinentia carni

Ab esu carni abstineatis, nisi pro infirmitatis vel debilitatis remedio sumantur. Et quia vos oportet frequentius mendicare itinerantes, ne sitis hospitibus onerosi, extra domos vestras sumere poteritis pulmenta cocta cum carnibus; sed et carnibus supra mare vesci licebit.

Exhortationes

Quia vero tentatio est vita hominis super terram¹², et omnes qui pie volunt vivere in Christo persecutionem patiuntur¹³, adversarius quoque vester diabolus, tamquam leo rugiens, circuit quaerens quem devoret¹⁴, omni sollicitudine studeatis indui armature Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias inimici¹⁵.

Accingendi sunt lumbi cingulo castitatis¹⁶; muniendum est pectus cogitationibus sanctis, scriptum est enim: «Cogitatio sancta servabit te»¹⁷. Induenda est lorica iustitiae¹⁸, ut Dominum Deum vestrum ex toto corde et ex anima et ex tote virtute diligatis¹⁹, et proximum vestrum tamquam vos ipsos.

Sumendum est in omnibus scutum fidei, in quo possitis omnia tela nequissimi ignea extinguere²⁰; sine fide enim impossibile est placere Deo²¹. Galea quoque salutis capiti imponenda est²², ut de solo Salvatore speretis salutem, qui salvum facit populum suum a peccatis eorum²³.

¹² cfr. Iob 7, 1

¹³ cfr. 2 Tm 3, 12,

¹⁴ cfr. 1 Pt 5, 8

¹⁵ cfr. Eph 6, 11

¹⁶ cfr. Eph 6, 14

¹⁷ Prov 2, 11, iux. LXX.

¹⁸ cfr. Eph 6, 14

¹⁹ cfr. Dt 6, 5,

²⁰ cfr. Eph 6, 16

²¹ cfr. Hb 11, 6

²² cfr. Eph 6, 17

²³ cfr. Mt 1, 21

Gladius autem spiritus, quod est verbum Dei ²⁴, abundanter habitat²⁵ in ore et in cordibus vestris²⁶ et quaecumque vobis agenda sunt in verbo Domini fiant²⁷

De labore

Faciendum est vobis aliquid operis, ut semper vos diabolus inveniatur occupatos, ²⁸ ne ex otiositate vestra aliquem intrandi aditus ad animas vestras valeat invenire. Habetis in hoc beati Pauli Apostoli magisterium pariter et exemplum; in cuius ore Christus loquebatur²⁹ qui positus est et datus a Deo praedicator et Doctor gentium in fide et veritate ³⁰, quem si secuti fueritis, non poteritis aberrare. « In labore, inquit, et fatigatione fuimus inter vos, nocte ac die operantes, ne quem vestrum gravemus, non quasi nos non habeamus potestatem, sed ut nosmetipsos formam daremus vobis ad imitandum nos. Nam, cum essemus apud vos, hoc denuntiabamus vobis, quoniam si quis non vult operari non manducet. Audivimus enim inter vos quosdam ambulantes inquiete, nihil operantes. His autem, qui eiusmodi sunt, denuntiamus et obsecramus in Domino Iesu Christo, ut cum silentio operantes suum panem manducet »³¹. Haec via sancta est et bona; ambulate in ea ³².

De silentio

Commendat autem Apostolus silentium, cum in eo praecipit operandum ³³. Et quemadmodum Propheta testatur: Cultus iustitiae silentium est³⁴. Et rursus: « In silentio et spe erit fortitudo vestra »³⁵ Ideoque statuimus ut dicto Completorio silentium teneatis usque ad Primam dictam sequentis diei. Alio vero tempore, licet silentii non habeatur observatio tanta, diligentius tamen a multiloquio caveatur. Quoniam, sicut scriptum est et non minus experientia docet: « In multiloquio peccatum non deerit »³⁶. Et « qui inconsideratus

²⁴ cfr. Eph 6, 17

²⁵ cfr. Col 3, 10

²⁶ cfr. Rom 10, 8,

²⁷ cfr. Col 3, 17; 1 Cor 10, 31.

²⁸ Verba e S. HIERONYMI, epist. 125 ad Rusticum desumuntur: « Fac et aliquid operis, ut semper te diabolus inveniatur occupatum » (ML 22, 1078).

²⁹ cfr. 2 Cor 13, 3

³⁰ cfr. 1 Tm 2, 7

³¹ 2 Thess 3, 7- 12.

³² cfr. Is 30, 21

³³ cfr. 2 Thess 3, 12

³⁴ cfr. Is 32, 17

³⁵ Is 30, 15.

³⁶ Prov 10, 19

est ad loquendum sentiet male »³⁷. Item « qui multis utitur verbis, laedit animam suam »³⁸. Et Dominus in Evangelio: De omni verbo otioso, quod locuti fuerint homines, reddent rationem de eo in die iudicii³⁹. Faciat ergo unusquisque stateram verbis suis, et fraenos rectos ori suo, ne forte labatur et cadat in lingua, et insanabilis sit casus eius ad mortem⁴⁰, custodiens cum Propheta vias suas, ut non delinquat in lingua sua⁴¹, et silentium, in quo cultus iustitiae est⁴², diligenter et caute studeat observare.

Exhortatio Prioris ad humilitatem

Tu autem, Frater B, et quicumque post te institutus fuerit Prior, illud semper habeatis in mente et servetis in opere, quod Dominus ait in Evangelio: « Quicumque voluerit inter vos maior fieri, erit minister vester; et quicumque voluerit inter vos primus esse, erit vester servus »⁴³.

Exhortatio Fratrum ut Priorem suum honorent

Vos quoque, caeteri Fratres, Priorem vestrum honorate humiliter, Christum potius cogitantes quam ipsum, qui posuit illum super capita vestra⁴⁴, et Ecclesiarum praepositis ait: « Qui vos audit, me audit, qui vos spernit, me spernit »⁴⁵, ut non veniatis in iudicium de contemptu, sed de oboedientia mereamini aeternae vitae mercedem.

Conclusio

Haec breviter scripsimus vobis, conversationis vestrae formulam statuentes, secundum quam vivere debeatis. Si quis autem supererogaverit, ipse Dominus, cum redierit, reddet ei. Utatur tamen discretione, quae virtutum est moderatrix.⁴⁶

³⁷ Prov 13, 3

³⁸ Sir 20, 8.

³⁹ cfr. Mt 12, 36.

⁴⁰ cfr. Sir 28, 29-30

⁴¹ cfr. Ps 38, 2

⁴² cfr. Is 32, 17

⁴³ Mc 10, 43-44; cfr. Mt 20, 26-27.

⁴⁴ cfr. Ps 65, 12

⁴⁵ Lc 10, 16

⁴⁶ Probabiliter Albertus pendet a IOANNE CASSIANO, Collationes, 2, 4: « Omnium namque virtutum generatrix, custos moderatrixque discretio est » (ML 49, 528).