

## Pastor Stef's Book Review – May 2018

The first thing that will catch your attention when you pick up **J. Augustine Wetta's *Humility Rules: Saint Benedict's 12-Step Guide to Genuine Self-Esteem* (2017)** is the glossy pages and funny colour pictures throughout. The pictures are reprints of Renaissance paintings of different monks and saints superimposed with modern imagery that causes them to be playing basketball and playing the electric guitar, or doing a face plant in a pool of water. Wetta himself is of the same juxtaposition. He is a Benedictine monk who teaches high school, coaches rugby and surfs (and was once almost attacked by a shark, which made it onto the news).

In this book Wetta looks at the wisdom that comes out of The Rule of Benedict (written between 480–550 AD) for the everyday Christian life – even if you are not a monk. Each of the 12 disciplines he cites, like self-denial, obedience and perseverance, is discussed as to how it can be practiced in thought, word, and deed. Each chapter is a short two page devotional meant to be pondered rather than raced through, with an assignment at the end. The chapters are also filled with many personal stories that are often quite humorous, which may break the stereotypes we have of monks.

The goal of the book is to help us grow in humility, which is always difficult as we can become proud of ourselves as we get better at humility. Humility, however, is certainly a key characteristic of a Jesus follower, as Jesus demonstrated by washing his disciple's feet. In a time of Trumped up arrogance and the loudest voices bullying their way to the top, this call to humility is needed all the more. Wetta does a great job of making a serious and important subject both engaging and desirable. And with a practical assignment at the end of each chapter, the last chapter's exercise was to "give this book away". So that's what I did. That means you can now go to our church library and humbly sign out the book for yourself. I'm now going to go and read The Rule of St. Benedict even though I have no plans to become a monk.