Intercessory Poetry

To our most Holy Father Saint Benedict (1658)

[281]	Most glorious <i>Father</i> , in whose School ¹ I live and hope to die,	
	God grant I may observe ² thy Rule,	
	For in that all doth lie.	
	For no perfection can be named,	5
	Which us it doth not teach.	
	O happy she, who in her soul,	
	The sense thereof doth reach!	
	But many praise Obedience	
	And thy humility,	10
	And yet conceive ³ not as they should,	
	What either of them be.	
	The simple humble <i>loving</i> souls	
	Only the sense find out	
	Of any discreet, obedient Rule,	15
	And these are void of doubt.	
	Yea, under shadow of thy wings	
	They up to heaven fly,	
	And taste here in this vale of tears	
	What perfect <i>peace</i> doth lie,	20
	Hid in performance of thy <i>Rule</i>	
	That leadeth unto heaven;	
[282]	O happy souls who it perform,	
	The ways so sweet and even!	
	By Prayer and Patience it's fulfilled,	25
	Charity, Obedience,	
	By seeking after God alone,	
	And giving none offense.	
	The more I look upon thy <i>Rule</i> ,	
	The more in it I find;	30
	O do to me the sense unfold,	
	For letter makes us blind! ⁴	
	And blessed, yea, a thousand times,	
	Be thou who it hast writ,	
	And thy sweet blessing give to them,	35
	Who truly perform it.	

¹ A reference to the Prologue of the Benedictine Rule, which refers to the Benedictine monastery as a "school of God's service" (Dominici schola servitii).

² Obey.

³ Understand.

⁴ "Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit. For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth" (2 Corinthians 3:6, Douay-Rheims Bible).

	For those are they which will conserve ⁵	
	This house in perfect <i>peace</i> ,	
	Without which all we do is lost,	
	And all that's good will cease.	40
	And praised be our glorious <i>God</i> ,	
	Who gave to thee such grace,	
	Not only <i>him</i> thyself to seek,	
	But also out to trace	
	A way so easy and secure,	45
	If we will but thee hear, ⁶	
	To have relation to our <i>God</i> ,	
	Who is to us so near.	
	For at this thou dost chiefly aim:	
	That <i>God</i> our souls do teach.	50
	O if we did truly obey,	
	He would by all things preach	
	His will to us by everything	
[283]	That did to us befall;	
	And then as thou desir'st it should	55
	He would be all in all-	
	O pray dear Father that he ever be,	
	our only <i>love</i> and all eternally. <i>Amen</i> .	
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⁵ Protect.

⁶ The Prologue to the Benedictine Rule begins with the word "hearken" (ausculta).