It seems that both the best and worse of humankind emerge whenever civilization is at a crossroads. Rome in the 5th century was at one of these great historical crossroads. Crumbling and only a shadow of its former self, the great Empire was rotting from internal corruption. Civilization was rapidly falling into the dark ages.

Into this vacuum stepped a young man, Benedict of Nursia (480-547). Like many of the great Christian luminaries of that age, Benedict was a man motivated by faith. Yet he also saw the necessity of establishing a practical framework for the organization and leadership of spiritual communities. After years of leading an ever-expanding network of monasteries, Benedict wrote his famous Rule.

The Rule of Benedict was a masterpiece of leadership principles. It combined the best of Greco-Roman organizational theory with the tenets of Christian leadership. In the Rule, Benedict crystallized insights from his years of managing an organization during one of the most difficult times in history. As a management system the Rule has been remarkably successful and enduring. With lessons as fresh today as when originally penned, the Rule has provided the basic leadership text for thousands of organizations for almost fifteen centuries.