

PAX

Dear Friends in Christ,



I wonder what you make of this path in the woods above Laurieston?

Does it look like an inviting way to walk?

Would you take this way if you were running out of day light?

Our perception of things and situations can radically change our outlook and reaction to situations in life. I mentioned last week that there is a growing interest with lives lived

'behind the wall' i.e. the lives of religious (monks and nuns). Sadly, this has nothing to do with new Vocations to this Way of life but everything to do with living life in restricted circumstances. The difference between monks and nuns, and you and I today is that they voluntarily made these choices. Whereas our situation, and new way of living, is enforced by circumstances, and some would wish to argue authorities. (We could discuss authoritarian governments and what they look like and how much freedom we need to give away to live in a civilised society? You may like to consider this, if you have not done so already! This is not our path though.)

Living successfully in restricted circumstances, one could argue, is the Way of life which Jesus offers to those who follow Him. Doesn't Jesus say "*For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it*" Matt 16: 25. What do we have to lose in order to gain our life?

Which piece of scripture would you choose here?

The important text, to my mind, for Christian living is summed up when Jesus said: "*Do this in remembrance of me*" Mk 14: 22-25, Lk 22: 18-20, 1 Cor 11: 23-25. This may not have been the scripture that comes naturally to mind, but this was Jesus' 'last commandment' to His disciples! It encompasses all He taught, did and said: worship the Lord your God Lk 4: 8; love your enemies Lk 6: 27, 28 Matt 5: 44; and being

broken and becoming consecrated, as Jesus body is in the *Eucharist* and was on the Cross and Resurrection. This is 'The Way' we, as Jesus' followers, have chosen to walk and it is not an easy way. Let us now consider the lives of religious. When a candidate prepares to enter a monastery there would be a list of things to bring, and a much longer list of what not to bring! "*A new candidate can bring with him the clothes he needs (apart from the monastic habit which will be given to him), a small number of spiritual books, one or two religious images - a crucifix, an icon – and perhaps some photos of his family.*"¹ Bernard Bonowitz says that "*most candidates do not find it difficult to adapt to desert simplicity. They are not addicted to things. What is much more challenging is separation from the world*"². It is the separation from the world of persons, especially family, friends and those dear to us, which is so hard. This is what we are experiencing, along with the restrictions of not being able to travel as we please. Have we unwittingly become a nation of religious communities withdrawn from the world and each other? For some of us the loneliness and the loss of freedom will be hard to bear. For others, the unremitting diet of a loved one or a housemate will be the difficulty! How are we to cope? The answer lies in a Rule of Life!

Last week we included in the Newsletter, Chapter 4 'The Tools of Good Works' from the Rule of St. Benedict³ with the suggestion that these tools would ensure we are well equipped for living our Christian life. The last tool was '*never to despair [lose hope] of God's mercy*'. If we commit ourselves to acting as Jesus commanded 'in Remembrance of me' and using the tools of Benedict's workshop, alongside our lives of prayer and work '*ora et labora*' as followers of 'The Way', then we shall surely be entranced by a climate of peace, joy and prayer. It takes discipline and a regular structured pattern to our day. We must build in time to treat ourselves, to relax. In a film about the lives of the Grand Chartreuse Monastery, called "Into Great Silence"⁴, there is a wonderful scene where the monks of this silent order are playing like children in the snow.



There is such joy in this scene, and such simplicity in finding Joy so simply. Perhaps this is where we need to concentrate in these difficult days – finding joy in the simple things of life: the wonderful colour

of this autumn; the joy in the taste and flavour of a good cup of tea or

¹ p.45, Truly Seeking God, Bernard Bonowitz OCSO Cistercian Publications

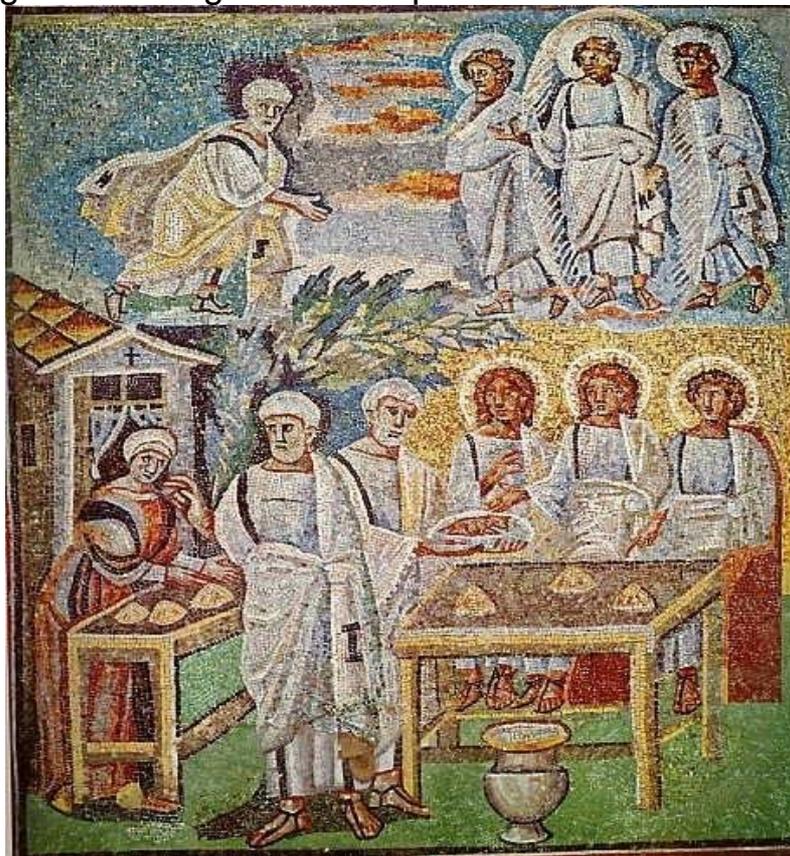
² ibid

³ <https://abbeyofreginalaudis.org/community-rule-english.html#thirty-two>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=094I4UVjyFg>

coffee – the possibilities are endless. You must just tune into this simple, God given, wavelength. There you will find Joy in the most unexpected of places.

Having trained for the priesthood in a monastic setting, where you had to ask permission of the Principle to leave the grounds just to post a letter, I think I can say that when a monastic community lives a constant cycle of love and service and generosity, that community makes the Holy Trinity present and visible here on earth. In doing so that community becomes a foretaste of heaven. This has to be our goal. Life's restrictions and disciplines can be an occasion for the kingdom of heaven breaking through into our lives. The ikon below of the Hospitality of Abraham is a pictorial image of the kingdom made present.



Our lives at times will seem difficult, lonely and hard. Even scary! We must walk in Faith, trusting in God's mercy.

May God keep you safe and well and bless you with great Joy.

Yours in Christ
Christopher
Rector

Church Update

A private baptism is taking place at St. Ninian's this Sunday (25th) and there will be a service of Morning Prayer at St. Ninian's at 11am Sunday 1st November. Details of how to book into this service will follow early next week.

Prayer Themes for Wc. 25th, October

Pentecost 21	For the NHS, our local surgeries, and all at DGRI. For those affected by the Corona virus throughout the world. Pray particularly for the people of the Yemen, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Northern England, and our communities.
Monday:	For those in danger of losing their jobs and those sectors of industry which are not allowed to open. For those in financial difficulties.
Tuesday:	For University students & staff and all at school.
Wednesday:	We pray for our care homes and especially their residents at Bothwell House, Hanover House, Carlingwark Care Home, Barlochan House Care Home, Munchies Park House, and Alma McFadyen Care Centre. For those at home who are dependent on carers and those who look after them.
Thursday:	For our Governments and all in authority.
Friday:	For those suffering from the effects of climate change. For refugees throughout the world.
Saturday:	For Guidance of the Holy Spirit in our churches' Mission as we live in times of great change.

Gospel Readings for the 30th week of Ordinary Time (Proper 28)

Sunday	Pentecost 21	Matt 22: 34-46
Monday	Cedd Abbot of Lastingham	Luke 13: 10-17
Tuesday	feria	Luke 13: 18-21
Wednesday	Ss Simon and Jude	Luke 6: 12-19
Thursday	James Hannington	Matt 10: 28-39
Friday	feria	Luke 14: 1-6
Saturday	feria	Luke 14: 1, 7-11

The Rule of `St. Benedict' Chapter 1 What Kind of Monks

There are evidently four kinds of monks. The first are the Cenobites, that is those who live in monasteries, serving under a rule and an abbot.

The second are the Anchorites or Hermits, that is those who not in the first fervour of the conversion, but after long probation in a monastery, having learnt in association with many brethren how to fight against the devil, go out well-armed from the ranks of the community to the solitary combat of the desert. They are able now to live without the help of others, and by their own strength and God's assistance to fight against the temptations of mind and body.

The third kind of monks is that detestable one of the Sarabaites, who not having been tested, as gold in the furnace, by any rule or by the lessons of experience, are as soft and yielding as lead. In their actions they still conform to the standards of the world, so that their tonsure marks them as liars before God. They live in twos or three, or even singly, without a shepherd, in their own sheepfolds and not in the Lord's. Their law is their own good pleasure: whatever they think of or choose to do, that they call holy; what they like not, that they regard as unlawful.

The fourth kind of monks are those called Gyrovagues. These spend their whole lives wandering from province to province, staying three days in one monastery and four in another, ever roaming and never stable, given up to their own wills and the allurements of gluttony, and worse in all respects than the Sarabaites.

Of the wretched observance of all these folk it is better to be silent than to speak. Therefore, leaving them on one side, let us proceed with God's help to provide for the strong race of the Cenobites.

You may wish to consider which of the four types of monks fits your personality?

Perhaps at different times in your life you will have followed the ways of these four types of monks. What was your situation like at that time? Why did you react in that way? Which are you like now?

You may also like to reflect on lead and gold. How do you see yourself?

Benedict writes about the sheepfold. Do you listen to your own voice or that of the shepherd?

Do you consider your life one of roaming, blown by the wind of desire, or a life lived stably? Which applies best to you now? Can you change your attitude or situation if you need to?

Do you run from commitment or do you seek alternative therapies or spiritualities?

Benedict in his Rule is anxious to set out a plan for those who wish to follow his Rule. His Rule is written for those who wish to be strong in Christ.

"Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile."

~ Mother Teresa

Help us feed over 1,000 people for 3 months!

Strict lockdowns in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic have had a dramatic impact all across India. In Sarnath, a sacred Buddhist pilgrimage site, many families have been severely impacted and forced into desperate conditions. The level of hardship facing many families in Sarnath is indescribable.

Our goal is to raise \$24,000. This would allow us to feed 200 of Sarnath's most vulnerable families every month for the next three months. For \$40, you can help to keep a family of five alive for a month. Please consider helping to make a one time donation or an ongoing monthly pledge so that we can offer food for the very poorest in Sarnath.

<https://uk.gofundme.com/f/sarnath-monthly-food-baskets-for-families>

Stewartry Food Banks

Manager Sarah-Jane Allsopp. If you cannot attend tel: 07730 788 335 or email projects@castledouglas.info and they will deliver to your door.

Stewartry Food Bank, Castle Douglas
Open 12noon to 2pm

Stewartry Food Bank, 24 High Street, Dalbeattie.
If you need food, drop in Monday-Friday 12noon-2pm.

Useful Contacts:

National COVID-19 Helpline 0800 111 4000

For people who don't have family or existing community support and can't get online and who are over 70, disabled, require the support of mental health services, are pregnant or receive a flu jab for health reasons, will be directed to our dedicated local team who can offer essential assistance.

NHS24 111 www.nhsinform.scot

Emergency 999

Doctor Out of Hours 111

Dumfries and Galloway Council 030 33 33 3000

www.dumgal.gov.uk/SupportDG

Business Support Helpline 01387 260280 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub 030 33 33 3001

Social Work Out of Hours 01387 273660

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway 0300 303 8558

Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service 0300 303 4321

www.dagcas.org

Samaritans 116 123

SHOUT Text SHOUT to 85258 for free

Scotland's Domestic Abuse Helpline 0800 027 1234

Age Scotland 0800 12 44 222 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Shelter Scotland 0808 800 444 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

LGBT Helpline Scotland 0300 123 2523

Childline 0800 1111

Dumfries & Galloway Community News

<https://supportdg.dumgal.gov.uk/media/23663/Community-Bulletin-Edition-42/pdf/Community-Newsletter-23-October.pdf?m=637390425898830000>

Crossword based on Matthew 22

Across

3 Whose taxes did they ask Jesus was it right to pay?

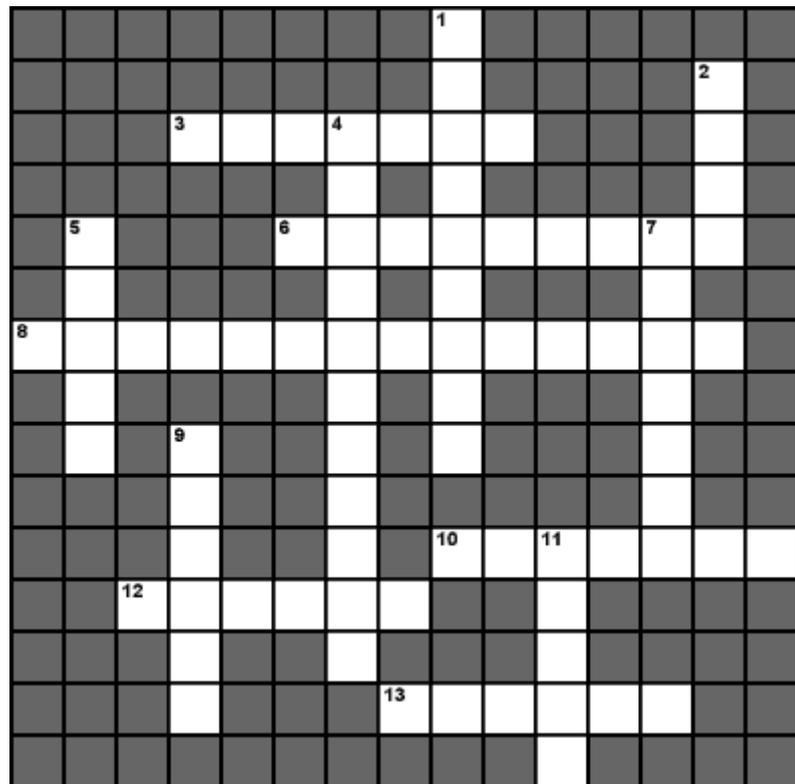
6 Who said there was no resurrection?

8 Web tending quad reveals feast for son! (7,7)

10 What did the wedding guests do with their invites?

12 What happened to the kings servants at the hands of the remaining wedding guests?

13 From many invited what happens to the few?



Down

1 Who went with the Pharisee disciples to trap Jesus?

2 Jesus said to give to God what is whose?

4 What had the king done with his oxen and cattle?

5 Where did one of the wedding guests go?

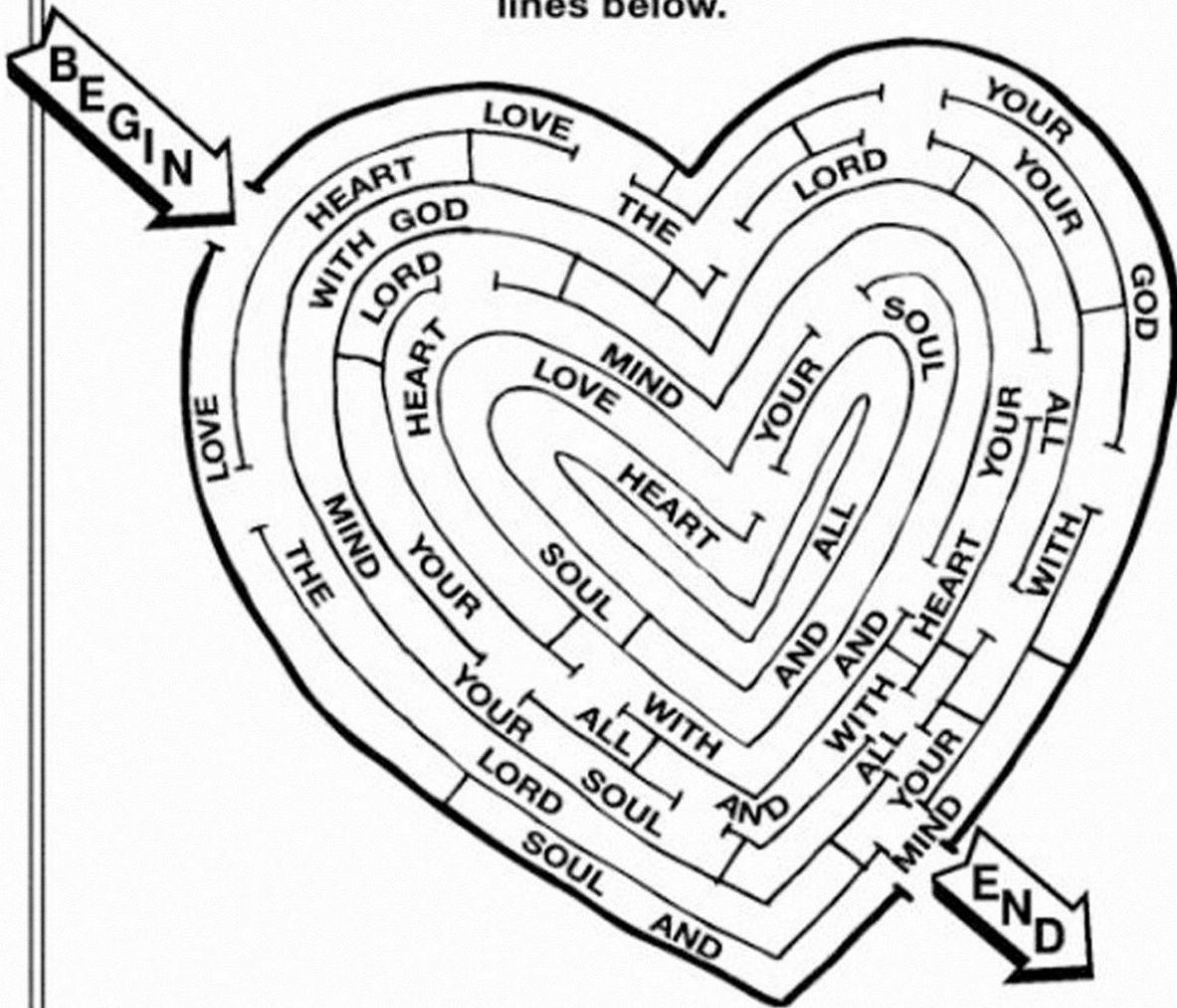
7 What did David speaking by the spirit say you should put under your feet?

9 God is not the God of the dead but what?

11 Which commandment did Jesus say was the greatest one?

https://www.bible-crosswords.co.uk/new-testament/Printable/Matthew_22.html

Find the correct path through the heart below. Write the words in order, as you find them, on the lines below.



“ _____

 _____.” Matthew 22:37

<http://www.calvarywilliamsport.com/images/mazeacti.gif>



Love the
Lord your God
with all your
heart and
with all your
soul and
with all your
mind.

Matthew 22:37