

PAX

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I was looking up at the moon last night (Wednesday) and thinking how beautiful it was, and how peaceful life can be.



The moon, in this picture, looks more like the Sun, but recently, I have found solace in walking in the early morning or at night. I understand that this is a rather Scandinavian pursuit and walking, with or without the aid of a head torch, can be very therapeutic. Some words of St. John of the Cross would be appropriate:

*My beloved, the mountains,
lonely wooded valleys,
rare islands,
thundering rivers,
the whisper of love, carried by the breeze.*

*The tranquil night
at one with the rising dawn,
the silence of music,
the mighty sound of solitude
the feast where love makes all new. (Canticle A 13-14)*

John of the Cross knows about the shadowy and difficult areas of our lives. He has been to those outer limits, where things break down. He was known in life as a 'quiet man'; and where his experience of God was

concerned 'he was slow to speak about such things'.¹ John of the Cross's writings were written from weakness, from the fruit of his experience, so when we read his works carrying the burdens of our lives, I would hope, we might feel welcomed.

Early in his life and ministry John was the chaplain to Teresa of Avila and her nuns. His presence was resented initially by the nuns, but he came to be appreciated for his holiness and wisdom. He was forcibly taken by friars to Toledo where he was placed in solitary confinement. There he suffered regular flogging (causing wounds that would trouble him for years), malnutrition, rotten clothing and lice. It is said that his captors spoke at his cell door leaving their words to ferment in his mind. You could say that John's life had fallen apart. His suffering from physical and emotional abuse, anxiety and a dryness of Faith, with God seeming so distant, may strike a chord with you and me, as we wade through life in these uncertain and painful times. The opening stanza of Canticle A is a raw cry from the heart:

*Where have you hidden
Beloved, and left me groaning?
You fled like a stag
having wounded me;
I went out in search of you, and you were gone.*

Life can seem devastatingly lonely for many of us, and our suffering maybe beyond measure – my thoughts are particularly with the Iranian Kurdish refugee family who fled persecution only to drown in the Channel this week. How different the moon may have looked to them! Life is difficult! For some such as Rasul Iran Nezhad and his family it was terrible!



It is almost too easy to feel an absence of God, but just as John of the Cross found the gentle presence of God in his darkness: so must we. If we make ourselves available to God in prayer He will come to us and turn our darkness into a 'tranquil night'. A night that Mary Magdalen would surely recognise, as the coming dawn, of Easter morning! We

¹ P.5 The Impact of God Fr Iain Matthew

may have to wait and be patient. We do not know how long for, but wait we must, in Silent prayer, bearing our wounds, our anxieties, and our worries. Waiting... for the 'God who comes'. The Christ who comes from the darkness of the tomb revealing His love for us. A love which we receive without cost.

These are very dark days and the novelty of the early days of the virus, with the good weather, have now been worn away totally. We are here, now, for the long haul. We must walk alone or perhaps in difficult company that is not of our choosing. Yet, walk we must. Joy, is to be found in the unexpected present. God strolls with us. Sometimes, He may seem like dogs venturing far off into the distance on our walk of life. At other times, He is rubbing against us, letting us know He is there. The question is 'are we?'

Draw me, the spouse sang; draw me; we will run.
And morning enters here; a secret sun
bursts from the skyline of the pronoun we:
all whom I love I bear by grace with me.
I carry them, sweet burden, as I go
up through the mountain darkness, through the slow
laboured ascents. No goal is set too far
if where I am, my heart's elected are.
No cliff cries halt between me and their good
beyond. And propitious likelihood
that I can sanctify myself for them
inspires each new ascetic stratagem.
O God, my hive, protect me as I come,
a laden bee bearing its treasure home.

Jessica Powers

May God walk closely with you, and may you find time for comfort in prayer.

Yours in Christ

Christopher
Rector

Please continue to hold in your prayers:

Erle & Anne Gardner, Marion Gardner, Gill Piper & Francis Turnbull.

Church Update

There will be a service of Morning Prayer at St. Ninian's this Sunday 1st November (All Saints at 11am). We realise that not everyone will be able to attend and attach a copy of the service so that you may join us in spirit and prayer.

Christ Church will open this coming Sunday (8th, November) Remembrance Sunday.

Our service pattern will be:

Sunday Services at St. Ninian's, Castle Douglas:

11am on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month.

4pm a service of Evensong or Compline on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

The Disabled toilet, at St. Ninian's, will be available for emergency use on service days. We would ask that you wipe down with wipes and spray all the surfaces you have touched touch, in order to protect other users.

There are do not use signs on the main Ladies and Gents toilets.

- Please book your seat in tel. Sandra 01557 331 596 or mailto: sandrawalshkbt@btinternet.com
- Please take a note of your seat number

Christ Church, Dalbeattie will hold services at:

11am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

4pm on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays

- Please book your seat in church in advance of your attendance with Sue tel. 01556 612863 or email suethomas2@btinternet.com
- Please take a note of your seat number

We would ask that you book your place by 6pm on Saturday evening. This is to ensure that there is a place for you on Sunday as our seating capacity has been severely restricted by the Covid-19 regulations.

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 all

refugees. All who are persecuted. The people of the Yemen, Bangladesh, Lebanon, all who are experiencing 'Lockdown', and our own 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 the American people as they prepare for their elections.
- Saturday: For Guidance of the Holy Spirit in our churches' Mission as we live in times of great change.

Gospel Readings for the 31st week of Ordinary Time (Proper 29)

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| Sunday | All Saints | Matt 5: 1 - 12 |
| Monday | All Souls | Matt 11: 25-30 |
| Tuesday | Richard Hooker | John 16: 12-15 |
| Wednesday | feria | Luke 14: 25-33 |
| Thursday | feria | Luke 15: 1-10 |
| Friday | feria | Luke 16: 1-8 |
| Saturday | feria | Luke 16: 9-15 |

The Rev Annie Rowley



Hello Friends! My name is Annie Rowley and I have only lived in Castle Douglas since September, but Christopher has very kindly asked me to introduce myself as a (soon to be, I hope ...) new member of St Ninian's congregation. However, I am not a *real* 'newcomer', as 30 years ago I lived in Castle Douglas for several years, and I still have a few old friends who live hereabouts. At that time I was a member of the local Quaker Meeting, but, in 1997, after studying part-time for a degree in

Health Studies, I moved to York to take up the role of Quaker Chaplain in the world-famous Retreat, a Quaker-founded psychiatric hospital, where I remained happily employed for 14 years. Towards the end of my time there I became friendly with the local Anglican priest who came to give Holy Communion to the patients and staff each week, and this led me into a new part of my life.

To cut a long story short, I became an Anglican, felt a strong vocation to the priesthood, and (to my own astonishment!) was selected for ordination training in 2007 (at the same theological college attended by Christopher many years earlier.) I was ordained in York Minster in 2010, and for the past ten years my ministry has been as a curate, an NHS hospital chaplain, and, since 2014, the chaplain for York St John University. My real calling and my first love has always been chaplaincy, particularly in the mental health field. I retired last year and decided to move back to Dumfries and Galloway as I love the area, and because my older daughter lives nearby in Kippford. I have two daughters, and four lovely grandchildren. I live alone now, so meeting with you all and hopefully making new friends is something I am really looking forward to, even though Nicola has (necessarily, of course) put us all into temporary detention. Hope to see you soon!

You will see Annie in our congregation and about town. Please make her welcome and keep her and her family in your prayers.

The Rule of St. Benedict Chapter 8 Prayer

During the winter season, that is, from the first of November until Easter, it seems reasonable to arise at the eighth hour of the night. By sleeping until a little past the middle of the night, the community can arise with their food fully digested. In the time remaining after Vigils, those who need to learn some of the psalter or readings should study them.

Between Easter and the first of November mentioned above, the time for Vigils should be adjusted so that a very short interval after Vigils will give the members opportunity to care for nature's needs. Then, at daybreak, Lauds should follow immediately.

Chapter's eight through twenty of the Rule deal with the nature and structure of communal prayer. This prayer has the psalms as a backbone, with other scripture and readings accompanying. A meditating community that uses the Rule as a guide to communal prayer will be in some way faithful to what Benedict lays out in these chapters, as well as being faithful to shared times of meditating together. Our oratory, where the Office is said, is also our meditation room. Finding a balance between oratory and meditation room as the same place is the challenge and legacy of a community meditating and living in the spirit of the Rule.

Benedict's use of time here is not our modern clock-time, it is more fluid, using the setting of the sun as its reference point. Sunset, at whatever time, was bedtime. Here, rising at the eighth hour is eight hours after the sun has set. In a European winter, if the sun is setting at say 5pm, then the community of Benedict is rising during winter to pray together their night prayer (Vigils) at around 1am. In our time of artificial light, rising at 1am is considered decidedly unreasonable.

Wintertime sleep leaves spare time between the conclusion of Vigils and the beginning of morning prayer (Lauds), which always begins when the sun rises. Benedict allows for this spare time and recommends that the community use this time wisely. He asks that those who need to learn the words of prayer do so. Knowing the words, without reference to them during prayer, frees attention so that prayer is more a conscious, rather than a self-conscious, act. Words are there to carry us deeper until they are forgotten. The less we think about words during prayer the better.

What do we do, today, with 'spare time'? Do we even have it? Is spare time considered time wasted, proof that we are not productive enough? If there is spare time, do we use it sensibly, or see it more as a gap to fill with 'mindless' stuff like binge watching TV, excessive social media, or playing games on our phones? In activities like these, rather than growing roots in the moment of consciousness, attention can be lost to fantasy and distraction. The art of conscious living can be lost to Facebook and Candy Crush.

What, practically, is this art of conscious living and why bother with it? Conscious living is anything done that is *not* fantasy and distraction. It is living as we truly are and being available to the movements of love within and around us. Therefore, the Rule uses communal prayer as consciousness practiced; at the time of prayer, *stay here* with God and each other. A meditating community of the Rule places meditation at the centre of this communal prayer. Everything during communal prayer is consciousness practiced, whether this be attention thoughtlessly on the words of a psalm or on the mantra. Each one serves the communal journey into silence. What else can we do to be conscious? We might recall something of the psalms during the day. We could repeat these words, consciously over and over in the heart (without thought or analysis) as a kind of prayer phrase during a spare moment, maybe while in a queue or waiting at traffic lights. We could use the mantra itself in this way.

Perhaps during spare moments, we could simply be aware of the people around us – look at them without thought, as the unique gifts they are, be they our fellow community, or people in the street. Maybe we could contact a friend, a son, a daughter, a lover – letting them know that we love them (that is, that we are conscious of them).

Staying awake to the people and things around us is consciousness as a way of life. This is what Benedict wants of us. And conscious living is what the consciousness of Jesus heals us for and draws us into; the loving way of the heart in all its forgotten

fullness. This is living the kingdom of Heaven. Living in a state of fantasy and distraction is to fall asleep.²

By Andrew McAlister

Amazon Smile Sign Up

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=%2F>

Please note that St Ninians is now registered with Amazon Smile. This means that if you purchase through that site Amazon will make a gift of a percentage to the church. At the site you will be asked to identify the charity you wish to support. You should type St Ninians Church: Castle Douglas.

The church receives 0.5% of what you spend.

Fred Coulthard

Traidcraft Christmas Catalogue



Please contact Sue Beddows t. 01556 670286 for a catalogue and to place your order.

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

² <https://theruleofbenedict.com/2019/05/14/chapter-8-the-divine-office-at-night/>

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/23685/Community-Bulletin-Edition-43/pdf/Community_Newsletter_30_October.pdf?m=637396493502330000

Crossword based on Matthew 22. Answers

Across

- 3 Whose taxes did they ask Jesus was it right to pay? **Caesar's**
6 Who said there was no resurrection? **Saducees**
8 Web tending quad reveals feast for son! (7,7) **Wedding Banquet**
10 What did the wedding guests do with their invites? **Refused**
12 What happened to the kings servants at the hands of the remaining wedding guests? **Killed**
13 From many invited what happens to the few? **Chosen**

Down

- 1 Who went with the Pharisee disciples to trap Jesus? **Herodians**
2 Jesus said to give to God what is whose? **God's**
4 What had the king done with his oxen and cattle? **Slaughtered**
5 Where did one of the wedding guests go? **Field**
7 What did David speaking by the spirit say you should put under your feet? **Enemies**

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

11 Which commandment did Jesus say was the greatest one? **First**

Apostles Creed

C Y R Y D E I F I C U R C E F I L S C W B L C P
R A B C G Y K H Y Z C Q E V E R L A S T I N G G
W S M L N B J R J X G K L A E X D Q V C R D V H
G C N A Y P U O X L X Y X C O M M U N I O N R G
J E O M H L S R H Z J T H S U S E J W R O S E B
D N I V O G F X I U G D E R E F F U S R I K Y M
Q D T Y L V N L D E N H D P A N U N I G V F Z X
X E C T Y V D G Y O D W E K E T Z G Q J W N F S
Y D E H V U E A R Q E K D S O H H M I F N R O B
H D R G U X L C Y D M O N D H T R Q R J R F N E
D Z R I T U S P E F O M E S S E N E V I G R O F
S A U M V D X O R M C X C J O N I V L L S U S P
A F S L O I T N E A Z F S R E H T A F V E O P Y
I K E A N D T T O R S G E M O D Q N V G A P L T
N N R M E E O I O Y U O D C W S W Z O J T G L I
T D I T M A V U Q V H Y T A I V G L D S E C E R
S S N N A D I S F R Z S B B L W O L B O D Y H I
O I V A B R R Q C H R I S T L L D T H I R D Q P
T J I K H P G Q R U E T A L I P K H R N V N H S
I M D D X U I G H O S T S V B I Z N H A B U Q K
R W G D R D N R E K A M I L U K Q U A L O R D Y
A S V S N E V A E H U N E I V H N G Z O W V I O
A E A R T H F Z Y R G Q Y Q Z P V O Q O I Z H M
Z X F V B E L I E V E T S S U C O N C E I V E D

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|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| judge | forgiveness | hand | day |
| rose | third | descended | Pilate |
| Virgin | Ghost | Holy | Son |
| Amen | ascended | buried | living |
| conceived | life | Lord | dead |
| born | everlasting | come | Pontius |
| saints | heaven | body | seated |
| hell | suffered | almighty | will |
| crucified | Mary | earth | Spirit |
| God | right | communion | resurrection |
| Jesus | believe | Christ | Father |
| maker | | | |



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