

A day in the Life of a Hermit

By Br. Bruno Watson-Colter

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He shall sit alone, and he shall be still; for he raised himself above himself.

Lamentations 3:28.

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Our abiding presence in the desert is justified only when we are there for Jesus' sake.

To enter really into the desert where we are called by God, we have a decisive choice to make: everything must be built on the Son of God, who came to put himself under the Father's guidance in the solitude of the Judean desert.

Jesus is the source of life in the desert by the simple fact that he is, by nature, a luminous beacon, a focus of attraction for those whom the Father has placed in his interior school.

Walking in the desert is to advance in silence behind the Guide. It is to follow Jesus.
Carthusian Matins.

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Although, in retrospect, I have had this calling since I was a little child, it was later in life that I understood and embraced it. Early in the last course of Nathanael (2009-2012), I wrote Archbishop LeGatt telling him of my vocation to silence and solitude and that led to an opening up of a period of discernment with him. As part of the discernment process I had to write a plan of life which might simply be said to be a defined spirituality and a schedule of activities over a day, week, and year of my prayer life in the context of the Liturgical year in the life of a desert dweller. Although a schedule might be the first thing one might look at for understanding who a hermit is, it is not the core.



A hermit's primary relationship is with God; from there everything else flows. Silence and solitude, along with the vows one takes, in my case in Archbishop LeGatt's hands, are means to support and express this relationship.

When all is said and done, with silence and solitude doing its work, what is left of a person is God's love for everyone in the world; indeed, for His whole creation. A hermit's 'Plan of life' is not meant to be the final say in how to approach our Lord but it is a tool to help the hermit keep his eye on the goal in the present moment.

In time, the fullness of transcendence is gradually understood to be immersion into the fullness of reality. It is not a floating around in a mystical mist or a "high" of some description. But it is being fully involved in the present moment as it comes and goes. Mystics seek God as He is; most others seek God as they imagine Him to be! A hermit's job, then, is not to produce anything but be a witness to the primary relationship in humanity's life: with God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To move past the understanding part, in the end, we will never understand God completely, and to grasp in faith God's invitation to each of us and be willing to lose control in embracing His will.



Simplicity in living one's life flows from accepting that the evil in our world is also present in our own hearts and allowing God access so that healing, in time, can take place.



This detachment and offering of self to God opens up a hermit to be an anonymous conduit for the love of God. It is a re-framing of the classic question of WHY to the answer WHO: our Triune God.

I retired from the working world at the age of 60 to try out the Hermit life style and live on a small pension. I celebrate all of the Liturgical Offices (Breviary) as well as Lectio Divina (reflective reading), including time for various prayer forms which includes intercessory prayer. Please send your intercessions to: brunothhermit@gmail.com c/o the Archdiocese of St. Boniface as I am a member of the diocese since having taken my vows in Archbishop LeGatt's hands. As far as I know, I am the only official hermit in Manitoba.

