DISCERNING A MONASTIC VOCATION

A Journey into the Heart of Benedictine Life

WESTMINSTER ABBEY
MISSION, BC

01 · TRUTH · THE LONGING FOR LIFE

What Do You Seek?

~ John 1:38



AMID the noise of life, the Lord still asks every heart: "Who is the one who longs for life and desires to see good days?" (Rule of St. Benedict [RB], Prologue 15). Our age treats everything as disposable, so any lasting promise seems absurd. Yet many young men, tired of the ephemeral, dare to believe there is a truth on which a whole life can be built. In an age when nothing seemed permanent, the first monks wanted to go from the inessential to the essential: *quarere Deum*, to seek God who became flesh in Jesus Christ. So St. Benedict commands:

"Prefer absolutely nothing whatever to Christ."

~ RB, 72:11

Yet St. Benedict's road to Christ is never a road alone. We seek God together, and in the brothers he has given us, we find him on the path of fraternal communion.



02 · GOODNESS · FRATERNAL LIFE

The Good Zeal of Brothers

ST. BENEDICT calls this "good zeal": fervent love. These eight marks (RB 72) are a way to joy, and to Christ, through brotherly love.

HOW BROTHERS LOVE ONE ANOTHER

I **Anticipate one another in honour**
Reverence the mystery of Christ present in every person; it begins a silent revolution.

II **Bear one another's weaknesses**
Be patient with others' infirmities of body or character as tenderly as a mother is.

III **Outdo one another in obedience**
Compete not for power, but to serve others first.

IV **Seek the good of others**
Give of yourself sincerely, as Christ gave himself for us.

V **Cherish fraternal charity**
Love purely, honouring the sacred bond Christ creates between us.

WHERE THAT LOVE LEADS US

VI **Fear God in love**
Let reverent love, not fear of punishment, guide your heart.

VII **Love your Abbot, humbly**
Submit to authority as an act of love, not mere duty.

VIII **Prefer nothing to Christ**
Christ alone leads us all together to eternal life, and gives your life its fullness.

03 · THE VOWS · THE GIFT OF A LIFE

Three Promises: One Freedom

I Stability

Fidelity to the place where God awaits you.

YOU stay for life, with these brothers, in this monastery. The monastery is the path itself: whoever does not abide does not advance.



Free from looking elsewhere, free to stay.

2 Conversion of Life



Fidelity to the monastic way of life and to daily conversion.

YOU begin again each day, refusing to settle into comfortable mediocrity, asking God insistently to bring to completion the good work he has begun in you.

Free from drifting aimlessly, free to grow.

3 Obedience



Fidelity to the will of God, received in love.

YOU listen with the ear of your heart for God's word in the Rule, in the Abbot, and in each brother, and you answer without delay.

Free from self-will, free to love.

04 · BEAUTY · THE LITURGICAL LIFE

The Work of God before All Else



THE backbone of a monastic community's day is the liturgy, which Saint Benedict calls the Work of God. Several times a day, from Lauds to Vigils, the monks gather in the abbey church to sing the psalms and listen to Scripture, because prayer is first God's work, not ours. He calls us, is present to us, and draws us into Christ's prayer to the Father, where we learn to cry "Abba, Father."

We come as we are: sometimes joyful and attentive, sometimes tired or distracted. The psalms give voice to all of it, from praise to sorrow, teaching us to bring everything to God. We come not because we are worthy, but because we need him and he has called us first. This daily rhythm thus gives order to all of monastic life: from the church, the Work of God reaches into our labour, our silence, and our life together, forming a community of brothers who seek God in peace while singing in the presence of the angels.



05 · UNITY · THE HIDDEN LIFE

The Monastic Heart



OUR age prizes acclaim and instant results, and it alienates us from ourselves. The monastic life offers another promise, a life gathered into one, where what we are outwardly accords with what we are inwardly, because the deepest transformation happens quietly, in the heart.

Christ's years at Nazareth are the archetype of this hidden life, and the monastery is where it takes shape. It is not an escape from the world but a turning toward what endures, life lived under God's gaze rather than for the applause of men. Here the Gospel, which for St. Benedict is Christ himself, guides us, and the Rule, "a school of the Lord's service," shows us his footsteps. St. Joseph, patron of Westminster Abbey, is our model: a silent, poor, faithful, and meek worker whose labour was consumed in the interior fire of adoration.

The path to this unity is humility: walking in truth, discovering who we are in Christ beneath the masks our pride hides behind. Humility is not self-contempt but the freedom of being known and loved as we are. In this way monastic life becomes a school of interior integration, where nothing essential is lost and everything is gradually set in order.

06 · THE LADDER OF A MONK'S LIFE

The Twelve Degrees of Humility

YOUR life, just as it is, becomes a ladder when you climb it following in the footsteps of Christ. "The sides of the ladder are our body and soul" (RB 7:7-8).

At the summit:
PERFECT LOVE,
which casts out fear
(RB 7:67)

BODY

12 Be bowed in heart and body
11 Speak gently, in few words
10 Don't make yourself the centre
9 Keep silence; listen first
8 Follow the common way
7 Know you are small, and loved
6 Be content with little
5 Humbly confess your evil thoughts
4 Bear hardship with patience
3 Obey a father for love of God
2 Love God's will, not your own
1 Remember: God looks upon you

SOUL

"What could be sweeter to us than this voice of the Lord inviting us?"

~ RB, Prologue

07 · THE INVITATION OF YOUR LIFE

Is God Calling You to Monastic Life?

LISTEN with the ear of your heart to your devoted Father (RB, Prologue).

CONSIDER DISCERNING WITH US

We welcome Catholic men aged 18 to 40 who are:

- in good physical, mental and emotional health;
- living a vibrant sacramental life for the last 2 to 3 years;
- faithful to daily prayer, in the silence that listens to God's Word;
- free from addictions for at least 2 to 3 years;
- open to seeking God in community through obedience, service, and manual labour.

NEXT STEPS

1 **Learn more** about us on our website (scan QR code below).

2 **Reach out** to our vocation director.

3 **Come and see** monastic life for yourself on a discernment live-in.

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