

Fr Hilary Hayden, OSB (1929 – 2016)

One of the oldest members of our community, Fr Hilary Hayden, entered eternal life on February 24, one day after his eighty-seventh birthday. His final years at the abbey were marked by significant health problems, including Alzheimer's disease and profound deafness, which made it difficult to communicate with him, but he remained interested



Fr Hilary Hayden

in everything around him, even simple things like looking out the window of his room in our seniors' wing.

In a largely autobiographical account of his life that he wrote seven years ago, Hilary said that already during his grade-school years at Blessed Sacrament parish in Chevy Chase, Maryland he was deeply impressed by the liturgy, especially its music, for many of the hymns sung at parish masses became "printed in my memory." He occasionally thought of becoming a priest during those years, but such thoughts gave way to more urgent concerns about stylish clothing during his four years at St John's College High School, only to resurface in a rather unusual way once he went off to college. At that time, his younger brother was a student in our own high school, then called the Priory School, and to Hilary's dismay he found that his brother was learning more Latin there than he was at his college: "So being a budding intellectual, I decided I should visit the school and investigate how this could be."

What he found on that first visit made an even deeper impression on him than those grade-school hymns. He was struck not only by the erudition of the monk who taught Latin but also by the dedication of the other monks he met that day and by the hospitable invitation from one of them that he stay for vespers, a term then brand new to him. He was also invited to return to the priory for the services of Holy Week, where the chanted prayers and the entire liturgy intrigued him. A subsequent reading of the Rule of St Benedict led to a sense of vocation, so he applied to join our community in 1949 and was clothed as a novice in the fall of that year, making his first profession of vows on the last day of November, 1950.

Having been sent for further studies at the international Benedictine athenaeum Sant'Anselmo in Rome in 1953, Hilary was especially appreciative of the course on the Church taught by an Italian Benedictine, Cipriano Vaggagini, one of the best-known professors at that school. Nine years later, Fr Vaggagini became one of the

principal authors of *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution on the church. Reading that document, Hilary thought to himself, "I've seen this before!" Working for the implementation of Vatican II became for him a life goal.

After two years in Rome, Hilary returned to St Anselm's to finish his theology studies at the nearby Catholic University of America, after which he was ordained to the priesthood in 1956 and was sent for graduate studies in classical languages at the University of Michigan. Having earned a master's degree there, he taught Latin and Greek in our school for the next eighteen years, after which he did further study of theology, especially Scripture, at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California, followed by some years of pastoral work in the Washington metropolitan area, first with the Mount Tabor Community in Vienna, Virginia and subsequently as chaplain for the Benedictine sisters in Bristow, before returning to reside at the abbey in 1993. He served as the monastery's guestmaster, an associate editor of publications for the Liturgical Conference, and a spiritual advisor for the Teams of Our Lady before health issues led to his retirement from all such work.

Among the tributes we received from some of his friends after his death was one that said, "Hilary embodied the 'gentle Christ,' despite his irascible temperament. He was always humble before God and never judgmental, and he never, ever stopped being in awe of the immensity of the love of God. His guidepost was always the Paschal mystery." Another wrote, "I had great respect for Fr Hilary and always looked upon him as a good friend. He instilled in me a love of the classics and also encouraged my RCIA work. He was a good man."

As Fr Hilary died in the second week of Lent, it was appropriate that at his funeral mass reference was made to one of the last homilies he was able to preach, given four years earlier on the second Sunday of Lent, when he referred both to the gospel of the day, the Transfiguration, and to the reading from the eighth chapter of Romans.

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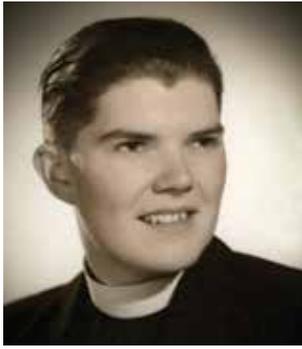
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Fr Hilary when ordained

He said on that occasion: "Our journey to Easter is something like a mountain climb. Who knows what encounters we may have as we seek a deeper fidelity to God? We find strength in the stirring words of St Paul in our second reading:

'If God is for us, who can be against us?' Wherever we are, Lent calls us to go deeper, encouraged by St Paul's words: 'Christ it is who died, or rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God and who indeed intercedes for us.'" All of us at St Anselm's ask you, our readers, not only to keep Fr Hilary in your prayers but also to encourage other men to consider taking up the Benedictine way of life that he lived for more than sixty-five years.

JAMES WISEMAN, OSB

A Benedictine Vocation

The Year of Consecrated Life ended on February 2. During that year many print articles, other media, and events were made available to aid discernment and promote awareness of the breadth and beauty of living a life dedicated to God's glory and the mission of his Church. One such article that caught my attention as our abbey's vocation director appeared in *Vision Vocation Guide 2015* by Roger O'Brien. His article was titled "What is your spiritual path?" and named four main personal dispositions or temperaments that help determine which kind of prayer life and services people would be inclined to make use of on their spiritual journey. O'Brien categorized them as Intellect, Devotion, Service, and Asceticism and associated each path with one well-known saint: Thomas Aquinas, Augustine of Hippo, Francis of Assisi, and Ignatius Loyola. He linked St Thomas with Intellect, St Augustine with Devotion, St Francis with Service, and St Ignatius with Asceticism.

I was disappointed that St Benedict did not appear on his list. The omission made me wonder what name I would give to his "pathway" if he were added. The first thing that came to mind was Perseverance. At a simple ceremony held at three-month intervals during the novitiate year, the novice comes before the abbot and community and is asked "What do you ask for, Brother?" to which he replies, "Perseverance, Father." In his monastic rule, Benedict warns the newcomer that the beginning is bound to be hard, for his "school for the Lord's service" is established with "a little strictness in order to amend faults and safeguard love." The goal is "to run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love." This does not happen overnight. It is a life-time project, and this is where stability must be mentioned along with perseverance. Looking elsewhere for a perfect community, where one believes he could quickly become a saint, is a delusion. We have to wait for heaven for that perfect

communion of saints. This is why St Benedict at the end of his Rule reminds us of the good zeal required here and now to support "with the greatest patience one another's weaknesses of body or behavior."

Roger O'Brien's article was accompanied with a chart of fourteen different personal traits and temperaments that characterize each of four pathways. The exercise was to grade all fifty-six traits with numbers from 1 to 4, with the number 1 representing traits least like yourself and the number 4 those most like yourself. One then compared the total number in each of the four columns. My own highest score was under the column "Ignatian—Asceticism," but that score was not very much higher than the scores in the other three columns. I would like to think if there had been a column called "Benedictine—Perseverance," I would have had my highest score there. In any case, as the author explained, the exercise is "merely a tool to give you more insight into your preferences when it comes to living out your Christian call." Obviously some people are drawn by their talents, their limitations, and their inclinations more toward one kind of religious congregation or order than another.

Keeping in mind the fourteen criteria for suitability in each of O'Brien's four pathways, I found that in looking for St Benedict's own criteria, only four or five character traits were named in his Rule. Chapter 58, on "The Procedure for Receiving Brothers," gives the three main ones: "whether the novice truly seeks God, ...shows eagerness for the Work of God (*Opus Dei* or Liturgy of the Hours), and for obedience and trials." Drawing from other chapters, one could rightly also ask whether the novice loves silence and is truly humble about his talents and his faults. The challenge for discerners is to correlate personal traits and preferences with what God is calling them to do. This is why listening, stillness, and patience are essential virtues for being able to hear Jesus' gentle but clear whisper, "Come, follow me here."

CHRISTOPHER WYVILL, OSB



The snow storm last January closed down public transportation in Washington and left the abbey grounds buried.

The Spirit of St Benedict in Everyday Life

Everyone is well aware that in the last thirty years or so there has been a dramatic decline in vocations to the communities of consecrated life in the Church. Benedictines are no exception to this development. Although the sharp decline has leveled off more recently, still the actual number of Benedictine monks and nuns is today a fraction of what it was fifty years ago, and thus the physical presence of Benedictines in the apostolates and institutions sponsored by them has been drastically reduced.

The Holy Spirit acts in powerful but often very mysterious ways! Thus there is a “holy irony” in the fact that at a time when the number of vowed Benedictines is down, the actual influence of St Benedict and his Rule and the spirituality based on this Rule seems to be dramatically up! The “Benedictine spirit” as applicable to the life of lay people, to family and even professional and work life (even in business!), is becoming widely understood and appreciated. Indeed a check on Amazon or a Google search will reveal that books on Benedictine spirituality are something of a “growth industry.” The profound wisdom, moderation, and sense of balance (Benedict’s *discretio*) in the teaching of St Benedict are applicable and potentially formative to many forms of community life, by no means limited to monasteries!

The existence of “oblates” or lay associates affiliated with Benedictine monasteries has a history going back many centuries, comparable to the “Third Orders” as branches of the medieval orders, such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Carmelites. Indeed, St Anselm’s Abbey has had an oblate group dating from as far back as the early days of the community in the 1920s. In fact, our monastery has had over the years oblate chapters in

Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Texas. These latter groups have mostly been consolidated with other oblate groups closer at hand or with the continuing Washington group.

This form of lay affiliation with the traditional orders in the Church still continues, of course, but since the Second Vatican Council and the growth in understanding and appreciation of the role of the laity and lay leadership in the Church, rooted directly in the gospel, a positive lay spirituality has developed. But lay men and women active in the life and work of the world have frequently found that the spirit of St Benedict and the emphasis in his Rule on a balanced life of prayer and work can give a shape and direction to their own Christian pilgrimage.

Beginning back in 2010 interest began to grow within the St Anselm’s Abbey School Parents Association in learning more about the Benedictine life and spirit which was the foundation of the school. A small but gradually growing group of parents, coordinated by Mrs Courtenay Pecoraro, began to meet on the first Friday of each month at 8:15, around the start of the school day, for mass in the abbey church celebrated by the school chaplain, Father Michael. After mass the group moves to the mezzanine of the lower school building for coffee and conversation, and then at 9:00 moves to the Board Room for discussion. Initially the focus was on the actual text of the Rule of St Benedict and ranged over monastic history and current aspects of monastic life. In the following years the group has moved on to the reading and discussion of a number of contemporary books on Benedictine spirituality applicable to the life of lay people, family and work life. Works of authors prominent in this area, such as Esther de Waal

and Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, have been read over the course of a year, with parents taking the lead in making brief presentations and guiding the group reflection. In this current school year the group is reading a collection of short essays on topics of Benedictine spirituality such as hospitality, stability, obedience, and prayer, published by St Meinrad's Archabbey and entitled *Sacred Rhythms: The Monastic Way Every Day*. Attendance at the monthly gatherings fluctuates between 12 to over 20, including both mothers and fathers of current students in the school and a number of parents of alumni who continue to participate. The number has grown each year as new families join the school community.

In the school itself, as the actual physical presence of monks on the faculty has declined, the abbey and the school administration began to look harder at finding ways to maintain and develop the Benedictine character of the school. This became an important item in the strategic plan for the school adopted by the school board of trustees in 2010. A faculty Benedictine Ethos Committee was formed, co-chaired by the school chaplain and a lay faculty member. This group meets regularly either to plan programs or, in alternate weeks, to join for *lectio divina*, discussion, and prayer together. The school now begins each year with one of the faculty orientation days in late August being devoted to reflection on the monastic values of the school. In January, after Christmas break, the faculty returns one day before the students for a day of recollection on Benedictine themes. The committee is working with the religion department in designing and implementing a Benedictine curriculum with units to be inserted in the religion courses for each grade level. As a way of keeping monastic ideals

visibly before the students, a series of banners have been put up inside and outside the main school building inscribed with the "Ten Benedictine Hallmarks," such as prayer, work, community, hospitality, etc. Each year the school community celebrates "Benedictine Heritage Week" in the week (usually in March) which includes the feast of St Benedict. During that week there is a school mass on the feast itself, and a series of events such as special speaker assemblies, films, and photo exhibits on monastic themes. Each summer a number of school administrators have been attending the Benedictine education workshop program sponsored annually by Illinois Benedictine University and St Procopius Abbey.

In summary, in a Benedictine school the Benedictine spirit and values which should underlie the entire program and life of the school do not become real just because there are some monks around as by some process of spiritual osmosis. Growth in this spirit needs, now more than ever, to be consciously worked at to become a reality. The steps may be slow, but the goal should be clear. Of course everyone hopes and prays for an increase in vocations to Benedictine monasteries, especially at St Anselm's, and for a gradual increase of monastic presence in our school. In the meantime, however fast or slow that development may occur, a great deal of progress is being made in guaranteeing that the Benedictine character of St Anselm's Abbey School will continue to be a reality. A lay faculty member was heard to comment that "there may not be as many monks around, but we are more Benedictine than ever!" The Holy Spirit moves in unexpected ways as the spirit of St Benedict grows in influence in so many areas of life in our world today.

MICHAEL HALL, OSB



Benedictine virtues are prominently featured across the walls of the abbey school commons in the lower building.

The Contemplative Heart and the Art of Peacebuilding

Michael Braeuninger is Director of Development and Outreach for the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy. Lynn Thonnard is an ICRD board member who participates in a network of local men and women that study St Benedict's Rule.

As Christians, we are called by Jesus to be “peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9), and when violence is directed toward us, to “turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39). Taken together, these passages call us not only to a state of being but also a state of action. It is the latter directive that many of us find most challenging, and when looking upon the lives of those who have suffered and even died in the practice of peacebuilding, we find good cause for humility. Gandhi, King, and Mother Teresa come readily to mind as historical examples, but if we are attentive we will find many living examples of peacemakers today. And so the question I put forth is: How does God work through me to make me (in the words of Saint Francis of Assisi) an “instrument of peace”? I might ask further: How does God work through *all* of humanity (not just Christians or “religious” people) to become instruments of peace?

When I met Brother Dunstan Robidoux at the annual Faith-in-Action award dinner of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) last May, I felt that a very important connection had been made between two worlds. I was later invited to make a presentation at the abbey on the work of the center, which I did with Lynn Thonnard this past November. Having taken retreats at other monasteries, I was excited about the visit—to enter the quiet and solitude of a contemplative community. The ICRD is a Washington DC based peacebuilding and conflict resolution organization. Our mission is to bridge religious considerations and politics in support of peacemaking around the globe. Washington DC, on the whole, does not readily bring to mind peaceful solitude, much less contemplation. The work of peacebuilding itself can be hectic and demanding, its urgency often pushing capacity to its limits. The political arena, meanwhile, is often characterized by material self-interest and zero-sum power games. Peace is achieved through changes in relational dynamics on many levels, but ultimately hinges on fundamental shifts in consciousness that mirror the spiritual transformation that is the aim of contemplative prayer.

ICRD is a “secular” organization that works in religious spaces. But to emphasize the secular framing of our work would be to understate the centrality of religion and spirituality in the lives of our leadership, our staff, and our partners in the field, who work tirelessly and often at their own peril to facilitate spiritual reconciliation between adversaries. As ICRD’s founder and president Dr Douglas Johnston rightly observed in his book *Religion, Terror, and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement*: “Virtually every culture and every person is ‘spiritual’ on some level, although

not every individual is religious or accepts the idea of a creator, a first cause, or believes in the divine of scripture, or even the sacredness of nature. If, as it says in the New Testament, ‘God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God’ [1 John 4:16], then there are many millions of loving people in the world who love God, perhaps unwittingly, when they display respect, empathy, goodwill, fairness, and compassion toward others.”

Neither a lack nor an excess of religion accounts for violent conflict in the world today. Furthermore, when we equate secularism with freedom from religion and therefore see it as the cure for religious conflict, or, conversely, turn to religion as a panacea for all the struggles of the world, we overlook in both instances a critical resource for alleviating suffering: the capacity to see the sacredness and divinity embodied by every human being and every aspect of nature. We might refer to the capacity for empathy and love as the defining characteristic of human dignity. For Christians, the “sacred” heart, embodied in the life of Jesus Christ, is the perfect model for human dignity. When we love our enemies, when we “turn the other cheek,” when we avail those in need of our service with nothing expected in return, we are affirming our own and the Other’s dignity. To amplify the image of an “instrument of peace,” Christ is the “natural key” to which we, as Christians, tune our hearts. To become an instrument of peace therefore is to “hear” the tuning of our own and the Other’s instrument and to identify where we are in harmony and where we are discordant.

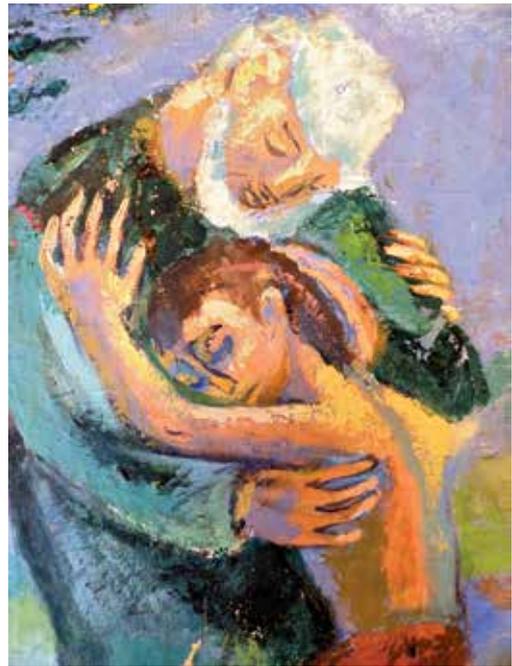
Juxtaposed with the contemplative life, political realism becomes inverted; that is to say, in the contemplative life, reality follows from what is cultivated within, not from without. I have always found it striking that in the Benedictine tradition, daily prayer is largely centered on singing passages from the Book of Psalms—an ancient narrative that deals in large part with war, with the dread of one’s enemies, with alienation, fear, and uncertainty. It is by no means a stretch to identify with the voice of Psalms in our present time. One might also observe that it is as true today as it was in biblical times that violence in the name of religion is often merely a pretext for political gain. But beyond this comparison, what I find truly beautiful in the daily recitation of Psalms is how the struggles of the human condition are internalized and transformed through prayer. And so Lynn’s closing remark at the end of our presentation at the abbey could not have been more apt and refreshing: ICRD provides a space for transforming hearts and minds.

ICRD senior vice president, Brian Cox, reflecting on over twenty-five years of experience in faith-based peacebuilding, cites “spiritual conversations” or “conversations of the heart” as defining characteristics of the practice. “Softening hearts is the work of divine grace [which] can create the space for God to bring about profound

spiritual, social, and political change. Changing the heart includes the intellect... the emotions... and volition... Changing hearts is a catalytic process that eventually moves mountains of obstacles and creates heretofore unthinkable possibilities."

St Anselm's Abbey, along with a number of other monasteries both Christian and non-Christian where I have had the privilege to enter as a guest, exist for the sole purpose of tuning or re-tuning, as it were, our hearts and minds to be in harmony with the Divine. When we are thus "tuned" and in accord with the Divine, it follows that our view of the world and our place in it is transformed; a further consequence is that we can no longer turn a blind eye to violence, suffering, and injustice—we are called to action. We must avoid the tendency to view the contemplative life as one that is opposed to action, or one that is detached from and therefore unconcerned with the world 'outside'. While not all are called to a religious order, as practitioners of faith-based peace-building we can draw a valuable lesson from a monastic community that opens its doors not only to the religious aspirant, but also to all who seek to reconcile our disunion with the Divine.

MICHAEL BRAEUNINGER



The Prodigal Son
(Stephen Reid, OSB)

Monasticism in the 21st Century: A Viable Alternative?

Ever since I arrived at St Anselm's Abbey—and I began my fifth year here this past March—I have been asked on several occasions what a monk has to offer the world of the twenty-first century. One person even asked me what monks do besides pray all day. A question like that seems to imply that monks are figures of the past, living in a way that seems strange and meaningless to people today. Moreover, even within the monastic tradition itself some monks in earlier times expected those following this way of life to become less and less fervent as the years and decades pass by. In one of the sayings from the Egyptian desert back in the fourth century, some monks one day asked their leader, Abba Ischyriion: "What have we ourselves done?" to which he replied, "We have fulfilled the commandments of God." The others then asked, "But what about those who come after us? What will they do?" Abba Ischyriion answered, "They will struggle to achieve even half of our works." To their final question, "And to those who come after them, what will happen?" their leader's somber response was: "The men of that generation will not accomplish any works at all, and temptation will come upon them. But those who persevere in that day will be greater than either us or our fathers."

Nevertheless, in spite of the expected difficulties and

the disconcerting words of someone like Abba Ischyriion, many persons do continue to follow the gospel counsel of giving up family and possessions to follow the risen Christ. I do not even think it is too optimistic to speak of a certain resurgence of interest in monasticism in our own day. After having become guestmaster here at St Anselm's, I meet persons both young and old, rich and poor, public servants and educators, wanting to come to the monastery for at least a short period of time in order to seek God in one way or another. For some, it is even a matter of finding hope for their own future.

But what about those of our guests who are seriously thinking of becoming monks, taking on a way of life that some in our generation find so strange? What is it that most attracts them? Or what is it that brought members of our own community here in the first place? There is no single, overriding reason that led every monk I know to embrace Benedictine monasticism. Some can look back to a particular moment or event that was a turning point in their life, but for others the sense of being called was much more gradual, and some of these may have resisted the call at first, wanting nothing to do with it and even being shocked by the idea. But if the call is genuine, it will hardly be able to be resisted. Mother Ephrosynia, a nun at an Orthodox monastery in France, once wrote: "In

spite of the trials, there's a growing conviction that there is nothing else that you can do, that no matter what, the monastic life is the only viable alternative. And this nags at you until there's just no other way out."

Part of that sense of "no other way out" could be expressed in terms of atonement, not in the sense of making up for the sins and failings of one's past life but rather in the sense of being "at-one" with the Lord. Once a monk or nun leaves the familiar surroundings of the world outside the monastery, he or she begins to focus on the things that most matter, the things that will determine his or her eternal destiny. Such persons stop listening to what has been called "the noise and racket of the world" and recognize that what they are embracing instead is a way of life that is paradoxically both difficult and easy. The difficult side was clearly expressed by Mother Ephrosynia when she wrote: "The monastic life is not 'fun.' Most of us, especially those who had to go through a severe trial to leave the world, experience a 'honeymoon' period when they finally take the plunge, make the break with the world and get to the monastery. It's such a relief to leave all that behind you.... But sooner or later 'reality' strikes and you see that everything that's been written about the hardships of monastic life is not just fancy words or symbolic phrases or allegory. It's not the physical side that's hard.... It's the encounter with yourself and who you really are and the struggle to change that is the slow but painful, day by day, minute by minute work of the monk."

But the reward for persevering must never be overlooked. St John Climacus, the seventh-century abbot of

Mount Sinai and author of the classic work *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, tells us that "All who enter upon the good fight, the monastic life, which is tough and painful but also easy, must realize that they must leap into the fire if they expect the heavenly fire to dwell within them." Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (died 1867) paraphrased the same paradox—painful but easy—in these words: "If everyone knew how hard it was in monasteries, no one would ever come. But if they knew the joys and rewards of monastic life, they would all come running."

The divine power that St John Climacus refers to is perhaps the best symbol of a way of life that both burns and purifies, pains and liberates. Those who have taken to it most generously do not at all disdain the various rituals, rules, and regulations, but they also know a freedom that can never be exactly described in words but can only be experienced. It was best expressed in what is for many monks and nuns their favorite saying from all the early desert literature, so with it I will conclude this article about what I have come to see is truly "a viable alternative":

Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said to him, "Abba, as far as I can I say my little office, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace, and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?" At that, the old man stood up and stretched his hands towards heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps of fire and he said to him, "If you will, you can become all flame."

ISAIAH LORD, OSB



Abbey grounds during last January's snow storm



Looking west; the bell tower at the Soldiers' Home seen from the abbey

Light-hearted Spirituality¹: Marching Along Together

It was through my experience in military service that I learned you can sing while marching. It was encouraged, at least during training as an Army Air Corps cadet. Whenever we went from one place to another on the base—to mess, to ground school, to the flight line, to physical training—it was marching as a platoon (although in the Air Corps it was called a “flight” rather than a platoon), and we would sing. It’s surprising how many songs you can march to. There was the Army Air Corps song, of course, “Off we go, into the wild blue yonder” (mothers hated the line, “we live in fame or go down in flame”), “I’ve got a six-pence,” “Coney Island Baby,” the tune “Stars and Stripes Forever” but with other lyrics (“Three Cheers for the Jones Junior High [it’s the best junior high in Toledo]),” “Be kind to your web-footed friends (for a duck may be somebody’s mother),” “The Cannibal King,” or even “It’s Only a Shanty in Old Shanty Town.” It can be a good experience to sing while marching in cadence and in step, unifying, uplifting.

The song this article deals with was not one of those we sang. It would have been suitable, but it just was not

part of our repertoire. It goes as follows:

*Marching along together, sharing every smile and
tear;
Marching along together, whistling till the skies are
clear;
Swinging along the highway, over the road that
winds;
Without a bugle, without a drum, we mean to chase
the jinks;
Rum-ti-diddle-di, here we come, we’re happy
rinkey-dinks.
Oh, marching along together, life is wonderful side
by side.*

It’s a song I learned in my childhood, but it surfaced again more recently when, because of a spinal problem, walking between buildings to classes at the university was difficult. I found that singing this song gave a lilt to my steps, made walking easier. The same has been true as I recover from subsequent spinal surgery.

We may think of spirituality in terms of the early hermits, those fathers and mothers of the desert, whose anecdotes we are fond of reading. They practiced charity by praying and doing penance for the world. They could exercise charity toward one another, but perhaps

¹ This characterization extends to every aspect of the piece, including (especially) all pretenses of scholarship.

only rarely, even though Our Lord's most urgent commandment was "Love one another." When sending forth his disciples for missionary work, Jesus sent them two by two, whether the twelve apostles (Mark 6:7) or the seventy-two disciples (Luke 10:1). One of the Church fathers explains that this was because the commandment of love is two-fold (love of God and love of neighbor) and because love cannot be exercised between fewer than two. An eminent spiritual writer puts it this way: "[Jesus] teaches us clearly that God calls us, not just as individuals, but as a community, and that how we relate to each other is just as important religiously as how we relate to God. Or, more accurately, how we relate to each other is part of how we relate to God."² In another place he states: "Christian spirituality is never something you do alone. Community is a constitutive part of the very essence of Christianity and thus of spirituality. God calls us to walk in discipleship, not alone but in a group."³ The song of which I write clearly supposes two or more persons: "marching along together," "sharing," and "side by side."

Spirituality need not be heavy-handed or heavy-hearted. The Old Testament tells us that "rejoicing in the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). St Paul says, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of ... joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). The word "joy" appears fifty-six times in the New Testament. In the gospels this has mainly to do with those who receive the blessings of the Kingdom. In Acts and the epistles it often relates to the spread of the gospel or to the interaction of the disciples with one another. Most importantly, Paul gives it as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

We read in the lives of many saints about the pervasive joy in their lives, even in the midst of sufferings and austerities. St Teresa of Avila is quoted as saying, "God deliver me from a gloomy saint"; that translates for me as a doubt that gloomy saints exist. St Francis is a prime example of holy joy, rooted in God, no doubt, but echoing his joy in all creation. Of St Dominic it is said that his joyous heart was reflected in his countenance, and he revealed his tranquility of soul by the joyful kindness of his look. No one was more affable, more friendly than he with his brethren and companions.

My theme of spirituality in the song needs to be illustrated by a little line-by-line "exegesis." At the outset the song speaks of "sharing every smile and tear," which is obviously the way it should be between those who are in any way "together": sorrows are halved when shared; joys are doubled when shared. St Paul agrees: "If [one] part suffers, all parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

"Whistling till the skies are clear." Troubles should not lead to gloom (remember St Teresa), but are met with joy

and optimism, based on the knowledge of God's love and power. This does not mean acting as though troubles do not exist—not a "What, me worry?" attitude of Alfred E. Neuman of *Mad* magazine, nor that of Ish Kabibble who played for Kay Kyser's band⁴ and sang, "Ish Kabibble, I should worry?" Troubles are met with confidence in God's love, power, and care. We find inspiration in so many psalm verses: "In my misfortune I called,/ the Lord heard and saved me from all distress" (Ps 34:7); "I waited, waited for the Lord;/ who bent down and heard my cry" (Psalm 40:2); "In danger I called on the Lord;/ the Lord answered and set me free: (Psalm 118:5); "In my distress I called out: Lord!/ I cried out to my God./ From his temple he heard my voice;/ my cry to him reached his ears" (Psalm 18:7). "God, I praise your promise; in you I trust, I do not fear" (Psalm 56:5, 11-12). Many others could be added.

"Swinging along the highway, over the road that winds."⁵ The following exegesis may be stretching it a bit, but a winding road conceals from view what is ahead. We may try to plan our life, but God may have different ideas. We don't see the way, but God, if we pray and trust, who sees beyond the bend, will lead us. Cardinal John Henry Newman, when finding things difficult, composed his beautiful hymn, which begins, "Lead Kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom." The last verse of the first stanza is, "one step enough for me."

"Without a bugle, without a drum": proceeding without worldly or material aids, needing and expecting help only from God. Jesus sent the apostles out with "no food, no sack, no money in their belts" (Mark 6:8), yet Paul describes them as "poor yet enriching many; as having nothing yet possessing all things" (2 Corinthians 6:10). He also says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

"We mean to chase the jinx": "jinx" suggests a type of curse, something of bad luck, ill omen, to be avoided at all costs. In the power of our spirit, in the power of our fellowship, all such is driven away. It is a sort of mini-exorcism. But as before, this is not something we can accomplish by our own power, but we must rely on God to accomplish it. God will certainly do so if we look to him in faith: "Your right hand, O Lord, magnificent in power, your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy" (Exodus 15:6); "the God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet" (Romans 16:20); "our struggle is

² Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 68.

³ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴ Some have complained that these are names not currently familiar. However, any so unfortunate as not to have lived in the 1920s, the 1930s, or the 1940s can easily find these by Googling on the web.

⁵ The more usual recension has "road that's wide." However, given the spiritual tenor of the whole song, that can hardly be the proper reading. Our Lord says "wide is the road that leads to destruction," and "strait [not straight] the road that leads to life" (Matthew 7:13-14). If anyone should suggest we should read "wide" because a highway must be wide—their penalty is what they deserve (Rom 3:8).

not with flesh and blood but with the principalities and the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens" (Ephesians 6:12). These may sound like heavyweights for us to contend with, but with God we need have no fear.

"*Rum-ti-diddle-di*": has been identified as a phrase from an ancient Ugaritic text, conjectured to mean "here we come." Thus the following "here we come" is a translation of the phrase.

"*Happy rinkey-dinks*"⁶: the term seems to have originally applied to the Winnie Winkle's younger brother's gang. The term suggests something nondescript, perhaps slightly disreputable, certainly without any dignity. It could easily have been applied to Jesus' disciples—fishermen, a tax collector, zealots; the Jewish officials referred to them as uneducated. If we seek to be spiritual we must renounce any thought that we are "something," are dignified, and such like.

"*Life is wonderful, side by side*": This is similar to the summary-appraisal form found in the wisdom and prophetic traditions of the Bible.⁷ The genre suggests the wisdom tradition, which intends to lead us to happiness

through right living. True happiness consists in possessing the dispositions listed above, that is, depending on no human strength or power, not pretending to be dignified, seeking our joy in others (and so "side by side").

But suppose you have no one to march with? No problem. Just invite Jesus to march with you. He loves company, He loves fun. In fact, He may well be marching with you unbidden. A perfect paradigm is seen in the case of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They are walking along the road when Jesus joins them without being invited. He obviously enjoys a little fun as He hides His identity from them. He teases them by pretending they should have understood all this from the prophets, though now the Pontifical Biblical Commission tells us that it is not all that clear.⁸ Again He teases them by pretending that He is going farther, when He knows full well He will stay with them.⁹ Then He reveals Himself in the breaking of the Bread, only to disappear from their sight. (Luke 24:13-35.) See the similar hide-and-seek with Mary Magdalen (John 20:11-18). Whether we are one or many, we can be sure Jesus will walk with us if, but only if, we are willing.

JOSEPH JENSEN, OSB

⁶ The more common recension has "Hinky-dinks," but it is the author's contention that this came about by contamination from a WW I army song, "Mademoiselle from Armentieres," whose refrain is "Hinky, dinky, parley-vo" (a corruption from "parlez-vous"), but some of whose lyrics are risqué and therefore have nothing to do with our song. Furthermore, this expression is found almost exclusively in connection with bars and cocktail lounges and therefore, again, does not suit the tenor of this song.

⁷ Cf., e.g., "This is the way of those who trust in themselves, and the end of those who take pleasure in their own mouth" (Ps 49:14); see also Isaiah 14:26; 17:14; 28:29; Proverbs 1:19; Job 8:13.

⁸ "Although the Christian reader is aware that the internal dynamism of the Old Testament finds its goal in Jesus, this is a retrospective perception whose point of departure is not in the text as such, but in the events of the New Testament proclaimed by the apostolic preaching. It cannot be said, therefore, that Jews do not see what has been proclaimed in the text, but that the Christian, in the light of Christ and in the Spirit, discovers in the text an additional meaning that was hidden there." From the Pontifical Biblical Commission document, "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible," II, A, 6. This explains why Jesus "interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27) and "opened the scriptures to [us]" (v. 32). In a distantly analogous way, we can apply this to the present study: the spiritual meaning of the song is "hidden," but this explanation can "open" it for us.

⁹ To this little duplicity we owe that beautifully poignant plea, "Stay with us, Lord, for evening is approaching."



The abbey grounds after the blizzard in January

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Abbey Photos: Isaiah Lord, OSB*

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