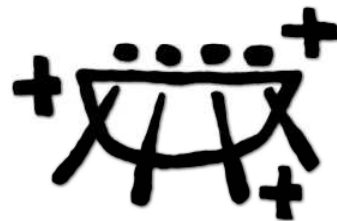


The Navigator



The Newsletter of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's
Volume II, No. 3 — Summer 2007

An Undivided Heart

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

*"Give me an undivided heart that
I may fear Your name."
Psalm 86:11b*

Psalm 86:11. It was one of those verses that grabbed me. You know, the kind that don't let go until you have chewed on it, turned it inside out, prayed about it, and let it have its way with you. In our Psalter reading schedule, Psalm 86 shows up on the 3rd day of every month. We've read it many times before, but it hit two months ago in a way that has held my attention ever since, especially the part about the "undivided heart."

This notion of an undivided heart is a unique one in Scripture and, in the Hebrew, only shows up three times in the entire Old Testament — here and in Genesis 49:6 and Isaiah 14:20 — each in very different settings and with different English translations. The Hebrew word is YACHAD and literally means to *unite*. So for the NIV translators who settled on *undivided* as the English equivalent for YACHAD, they wanted to convey the idea that an undivided heart is the same thing as a united heart.

So why did David implore God to knit his heart together? His petition can only mean that he was conscious of the threat of a divided or double heart and, sure enough, we see a double heart spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures as well. In 2 Chronicles 12:33 and Psalm 12:2 the Hebrew literally speaks of "a heart and a heart" — a very negative thing. And when translated

into English idiom they refer to matters of disloyalty and deception.

Can we possess two hearts? Can double-heartedness jeopardize our loyalty to God? Can double-heartedness lead to deceptive or hypocritical faith? David must've thought so. Enough that, if there was even a suspected rift or chasm in his heart, if there was anything that would interfere in his relationship with the Lord, he wanted it mended and restored; or as his prayer is translated in the NKJV, "Unite my heart."

David also tells us why this is so important. He wants a united and undivided heart so that "I may fear Your name." What does he mean by this? Reverence toward God for sure, but to be more accurate, he's speaking of an even deeper, profound, reverential dread that will constrain his heart to bend before God's augustness, authority, and renown. That sounds pretty weighty, but according to David in verse 12, such total deference and homage is the only safe place where his whole heart can be fully engaged in praising the Lord. Fear of the Lord is the foundational building block of praise. Otherwise, praise is lip service.



So what's the matter with double-heartedness? Isn't two better than one? Far from it. It's not like a yoke of oxen where a team is hitched together and they pull the same load with greater effort in the same direction. It's not like a dragster with two or more throbbing engines all linked to the drive train to provide greater torque and power. A

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double heart does not mean a double capacity for loving and serving the Lord. A double heart actually means you have more than one master. It means conflict. It means split interests. It means divided loyalties. It means a part of you goes in one direction and a part of you goes in another direction. At its very foundation it simply means a heart of hypocrisy. In fact, a divided heart can make you feel like you're being held captive in Sheol because there's such a struggle for alliances within you – and perhaps that's what David was referring to in verse 13. In the end, it's the equivalent of James' warning about fresh water and salt water coming from the same spring. As James says, **"My brothers, this should not be"** (James 3:10-12).

David understood this prayer to be absolutely integral to his walk with the Lord. He prayed similarly in Psalm 51:10, **"Create in me a pure heart, O God."** And God Himself desires to give us a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26). Since the Jewish concept of heart embraces the richest totality of man's immaterial self – emotion, thought, affections, and will – we can see how a divided heart can so easily betray and corrupt our relationship with the Lord, especially if one half is longing for things that are at constant war with the things of God.

What, then, should characterize the heart of a monastic (or any Christian for that matter) so that we can stand in undivided reverence, humility, obedience, awe, and fear before the Lord? Perhaps Keil and Delitzsch have it right in their *Commentary on the Old Testament*. They said that, at its core, this prayer is David's plea for God to take his heart and "direct all its powers and concentrate them on the one thing." We've heard that phrase before. It's from Jesus when He told Martha, **"But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part"** (Luke 10:42).

When Jesus said this, he was referring to the fact that Mary was sitting at his feet. Not that she was aware of the other things around her – the house full of disciples, the meal preparations taking place, etc. – and was simply keeping them in the background as secondary concerns but rather, for that moment in time, they weren't even a vague consideration. She was fully engrossed and submitted to the presence of Christ; nothing else mattered. That's what it means to have a united heart. That's what it means to have an undivided heart.

I think our civics classes have done a lot to undermine what it means to be a Christian. We're taught that we

"We can see how a divided heart can so easily betray and corrupt our relationship with the Lord..."

have a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." It's all about us, and we carry that same idea into our faith. Perhaps as monastics seeking an undivided heart we need to rethink our faith as being something "of Jesus, by Jesus, and for Jesus." That means our daily activities, responsibilities, and interests are not ours at all; they are Christ's as He works through us. How we love and treat our spouses, how we interact with our children, how we conduct ourselves at work, how we decide our purchases, how we select our friends, how we spend our spare time, even how we entertain our imaginations should all be the result of Christ's lordship over our hearts.

How does he gain that Lordship? Through repentance. Through the spiritual disciplines. Through not losing hope even though regular failure may frustrate you. Through seeking the prayerful support of others. Through yielding yourself in accountability to others in those areas that are divided. Through not concentrating on the division but focusing on Christ alone who unites. Through the Holy Spirit who knits us to Christ who is already one with the Father. Through joy rather than guilt.

There are many things in the world that seek to divide our hearts, leading us to doubt and forfeit our testimony. Interests, addictions, desires, imaginations; all of these can be used by the enemy to produce double-hearted lives. Jesus is calling us back to sincerity and singleness of heart where He alone can rule and reign. David saw it. Pray that we can be like David, a man after God's own heart. ✕

*"O Lord,
God of our fathers
Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,
keep this desire in the hearts
of your people forever,
and keep their hearts loyal to you."
1 Chronicles 29:18*

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Single-Minded Faith

Mother Sue Andraeas, Prioress

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.”
Psalm 139:23-24*

Now there's a dangerous prayer if ever there was one! In the verses just before these four lines, David has just finished talking about how much he hates his enemies. Now he's asking to be searched and tested. Isn't that a gutsy move? I mean, that's not a, "Go ahead, make my day" kind of prayer. That's more of a, "Go ahead and wreck my day" kind of prayer! Usually, when we allow God to search and test us, it involves humility (humiliation) and spiritual surgery, doesn't it?

I had begun exploring this whole idea of tests and trials in my recent meditation on simplicity – life is not exactly relaxing here these days. And it all began to come together as I read about the poor widow in Mark 12. You know her; she's the one with two little copper coins. She is standing in line with all the rich people who are getting rave reviews at the temple because they are putting their excess cash into the treasury. But this widow puts in a couple of coins that don't even equal a penny in value. What was she thinking!?

Did this silly woman think that anyone wanted her two cents – financial or intellectual? (I have, in the past, been guilty of looking at the report in our church bulletin where it lists the previous week's giving and wondered who put the ".02" in the



plate. It messes up the nice round numbers for the treasurer; and how much good can two cents really make? I've learned that sometimes it's that small gift, given by one with a pure heart, which can make all the difference. But I'm getting ahead of myself.)

There are a lot of things this widow could have done with her two coins. After all, a widow in Jesus' day did not have a lot of career options. In fact, she really only had one, and it was not exactly reputable. She had no Social Security to fall back on, no welfare, no Medicare, and unless she had a son, she had nowhere to live. All she really DID have was the promise of the tax bill that the Pharisees would require her to pay. (That's probably why Jesus, a few verses before he noticed our widow friend, mentioned that the Pharisees 'devour widows' houses' in Mark 12:40.)

“Part of your spirit wants to be in heaven with God,...But part is still connected to earth and wonders if faith in Him will ‘work.’”

She could have spent a lot of mental energy trying to figure out how to make her coins more valuable, how to finagle extra worth out of something almost worthless. But she didn't. She didn't opt for the complex plan of worry but went straight for the simple. Give God everything! Well, I decided I really liked this lady, and she became my Role Model of the Month. I asked the Lord to teach me more about her and show me why he admired her so much. The following is what I learned. You might want to have your Bible handy so you can track through a few verses with me. It'll help to see what comes before – and sometimes after – the verses I'm talking about.

We need to begin by looking at John 16:33. Jesus is telling his disciples how they are going to be scattered, hinting at the persecution to come. He tells them, 'In this world you will have trouble...' We don't like to hear those kinds of things from Jesus. We want to hear about being delivered and saved and healed – as if we would need saving, healing and delivering if our life did not include suffering! (We can be so near-sighted sometimes.) The book of James is written to "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations." Jesus' 'scatter sermon' is happening. James tells us not only to expect trials, but to 'consider it pure joy' when we face trials (James 1:2). Oh dear.

How many times have YOU said, 'What a terrible day – thank you, God, for this terrible day!?' James says we must persevere, and that perseverance will help us mature (verses 3 and 4). If we need wisdom, ask God for some (verse 5). BUT, if we ask, we must believe and not doubt or we can plan

on not receiving anything from the Lord (verses 6 and 7). Ouch. Why won't we receive anything? Verse 8 explains that it's because we are 'double-minded' and 'unstable.' Double minded. The Greek word here actually means 'two-spirited' or 'vacillating.' Part of your spirit wants to be in heaven with God, the part that wants His wisdom. But part is still connected to earth and wonders if faith in Him will 'work' because we don't understand that even the trouble we're facing is under God's divine control. James goes on to teach us how to fix this problem of double-mindedness. "Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded" (James 4:8). Of course, he doesn't mean to go wash your hands with soap, but is referring to a priest's ritual cleansing prior to entering the temple; the outward, symbolic cleansing that

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represents internal cleansing. He also mentions a pure heart. Evidently, James knew his Psalter! (See Psalm 24:3-4).

How can purifying your heart keep your spirit from being double? Because the heart, the *kardia*, in Greek, did not mean the organ that pumps blood but rather our thoughts and feelings (as in learning something *by heart*, or loving someone with *all our heart*). The heart was also seen as the middle ground between the spirit and the intellect. So James is recommending that, in order to keep yourself from 'spiritual schizophrenia,' you need to be spiritually clean and pure, and THAT happens when you confess sins and let them go (clean hands) and keep your mind and emotions from impurity (don't worry about your troubles, but rejoice that God is in control of them).

I think another clue can be found in Paul's epistle to the Romans. All the way at the end of this letter, even after all the personal greetings, Paul warns the Christians in Rome to watch out for people who cause divisions by putting up obstacles. If we read Romans 16:18-19 in the KJV, we see the word "simple" two times. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the **simple**. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good and **simple** concerning evil" (emphasis mine). The first time, Paul isn't talking about simple as being easy, but as being unsuspecting. He is warning them that trials are coming. Next, he wants the Roman Church to be *wise* as to what is good, and 'simple' or *unmixed* in the bad things. In the Greek, these are not the same kind of 'simple.' In fact, if you look at the Greek, you'll see two completely different words! What he is saying is that simplicity is not so much a lack of busy-ness but a lack of being double-spirited. Paul's talking about not letting earthly trials interfere with our faith. Earthly trials are inevitable. In fact, I'm beginning to see that they are necessary! Otherwise, Jesus would not have made such a big deal about them, and we would not have so many portions of Scripture telling us how to deal with them.

So let's review. In this world, you will have troubles. Count it all as joy. Why? Because trouble is your gauge to test how strong your faith is. They will let you know if your hands are clean and your heart pure, or if are you vacillating between heaven and earth. They will let you know if you're near to God or if you're double-minded and keeping God at a distance. The way you perceive trials becomes your "faith barometer." Don't 'homogenize' earthly cares and faith, mixing them until they become inseparable and your faith only strong

when there is no adversity, because it will lead to doubting God's provision for your life, resulting in anxiety.

If you are not simple-minded, if you are focusing on the things of earth rather than being 'unmixed,' clean up your act – physically, mentally, and emotionally – through the tools of faith. Confession, prayer, and meditation on Scripture are good starters. That will keep your hands clean and your heart pure. In the end, I think our '2-penny widow' was much wiser in her simplicity than the rich temple contributors in their desire for earthly praise. My guess is that she was probably singing as

"...in order to keep yourself from 'spiritual schizophrenia,' you need to be spiritually clean and pure..."

she dropped those coins in the treasury because she knew she had a treasure far beyond earthly wealth. She had the approval

of her Savior, and he made sure that her simplicity was recorded for all time! Ours will be too, recorded in heaven. And the result of Jesus' approval is blessed, simple peace on earth – no matter what earth is throwing our way. What do you think? Rejoice...regardless! ✠

Father, all powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give You thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. You, with Your only begotten Son and the Holy Spirit are God.

God, one and immortal;
God, incorruptable and unmoving;
God, invisible and faithful;
God, wonderful and worthy of praise;
God, strong and worthy of honor;
God, most high and magnificent;
God, living and true.

We believe You; we bless You; we adore You.

We praise Your name forever more through Christ
Who is the salvation of the universe;
Who is the life of mankind;
Who is the resurrection of the dead.

Through Him the angels praise Your majesty;
the dominations adore; the powers of heaven and
earth tremble; the virtues and the blessed seraphim
concelebrate in exultation.

So grant, we pray You, that our voices may be admitted to that chorus, in humble declaration of Your glory. Amen.

Adapted from *The Stowe Missal*
early 9th century

Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's: The Shape of Things to Come

If you haven't already noticed, we're taking our time and moving slowly during this period of formation for the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. This is intentional. We want to make sure that we're attentive to the Lord's plans for Saint Brendan's and that our efforts are faithful to that plan.

The concept of the Monastic Fellowship was first presented as a draft version of our information pamphlet attached to the December 2006 newsletter. It described, in general terms, the lay monastic nature of Saint Brendan's. It also described the two kinds of membership associated with the Monastic Fellowship: Friends and Oblates. It was a good overview, but now we want to give you more.

On the following page is a chart that begins to take some of those fuzzy edges and bring them into focus, providing additional detail to help you better understand what membership is all about. I also want to explain several of those items on the chart that might not be immediately self-evident.

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS: The first thing you'll notice is that we are establishing a set of goals for each level of membership. Those goals are achieved or aided by working on the expectations associated with that level. Also, the goals are cumulative. That means, for example, once you have gained a competency in the goals for a particular level, you don't lay them aside. They are added to the goals of the next level or are superseded by an even more thorough expectation of the same goal. These are building blocks that don't go away. Each layer provides a foundation for the next and, taken all together, they provide the framework for a life of lay monasticism.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: In the list of Goals and Expectations you'll see the recurring line item for financial support. As you know, the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's is not self-sustaining. While we have several members and friends who provide us with occasional monetary

gifts in the mail or leave a donation after making a retreat, the ministry is by-and-large funded out of our own pockets. This includes transportation expenses; office expenses; construction of guest rooms for retreatants; expenses related to state and federal requirements for incorporation; web site expenses; printing expenses for the newsletters, the Breviary, the Rule, formation study guides, and membership applications; mailing expenses; etc. In other words, Saint Brendan's is a full-time ministry with all the associated expenses of such a ministry but with no parish tithes to cover those expenses. That means we need help. Our desire is this: when your membership comes up for an "annual renewal," a suggested amount for annual support will be recommended to accompany the return of your renewal form. This will make sure that we have sufficient funds to continue sending out newsletters and study guides and for maintaining the web site. Saint Brendan's,

**"These are building blocks...
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a life of lay monasticism."**

of course, is a faith ministry and we will never demand financial support as a criteria for membership, but for those who are able, we see this as a part of your partnership with the ministry. Also, each level of membership comes with a slightly higher recommended annual donation. The higher you go in lay monasticism, the greater your degree of sacrifice, and finances are a reasonable indicator of that sacrifice. By the way, at this point in time Mother Sue and I receive no stipend or salary from any donation made to Saint Brendan's – that's a part of our sacrifice to this ministry and to you.

PURCHASE OF FELLOWSHIP ITEMS: Whenever you see the requirement to obtain the Breviary or the Rule of Life, that means to purchase them. The prices will be set to reflect the cost of their production and mailing. You will also be asked to purchase the 'emblem' of the Temporary Covenant Promise (TCP) and the Lifetime Covenant Profession (LCP). We're still in the process of designing these. The TCP emblem will probably be a small medallion you can wear on a chain under your garments. The LCP emblem will be larger, perhaps a stylized cross. However, it will not be mandatory for you to wear the cross at worship or at gatherings of the Monastic Fellowship (although that would be very nice); especially

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clergy who may already have pectoral crosses with significant meaning.

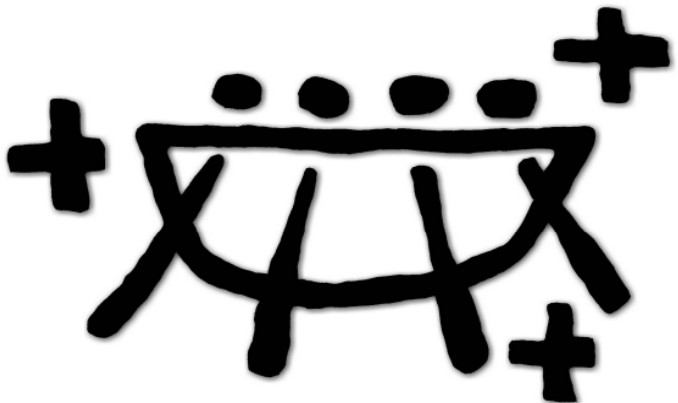
MONASTIC LABOR: We need to explain our vision of Monastic labor. Our desire for members is that they give themselves over to some form of monastic labor in the local communities and/or churches. This is rooted in the deep monastic tradition of working with your hands. Pray about the type of monastic labor you should perform. Remember, it's not like committing yourself to 20 hours of community service and then you're done. This is something you give yourself to just as you would give yourself over to one of the spiritual disciplines. It's finding a task, job, volunteer position, or other labor that keeps you connected as a servant to the community – reading to children at the local school, helping stock shelves at the food bank, doing the laundry and dishes for a crippled neighbor, volunteering to cut the grass at church, picking up trash along the highway, etc. You are the hands and feet of Christ, and that often means labor without recognition or recompense. We are also requiring that you provide suitable labor to Saint Brendan's itself. This means your work contribution, other than financial, to the Monastic Fellowship and/or to the Retreat Community. Can you proofread newsletter articles? Can you provide useful, updated links for the web site? While visiting here, can you paint a wall or help with landscaping? Can you conduct a local fundraiser for a special project or piece of equipment that we need? Can you write book reviews on books that speak about monastic or disciplined life so that we can post them on the internet? As a part of the Fellowship/Community, you're a part of its labor.

MAKING RETREATS: We know that Saint Brendan's Priory House is very far away from many of you. In fact, Dennysville is far away from nearly everything! However, we don't want to use that as an excuse for you to miss out on spiritual retreats. Every state has convents, monasteries, and religious houses open to people seeking a retreat. The rates for a guest room are very reasonable and, depending on where you go, the retreat master will often find ways to incorporate you into the worship and work life of that community. The higher you progress in the Monastic Fellowship, the more frequently you should be making retreats. The only time a retreat is required at Saint Brendan's is prior to making a Temporary Covenant

Promise so that we can personally get to know you. Actually, you can come to Saint Brendan's throughout your time of membership, but it's mandatory prior to the TCP. Even after the TCP or LCP it's not mandatory to come here, but we sure would encourage it. The only requirement at the Promise/Profession level is to make annual retreats wherever you can. At this stage of your formation, it should be a burning desire to spend time at places where the rhythms of monasticism are fully practiced.

This should give a basic idea of where the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's is heading. At each level of membership, the application and acceptance packages will amplify even further the things that are required at that level. We're working on those next. Within the next issue or two of this newsletter, we'll be attaching copies of those applications so that we can begin to pray about and evaluate where you are in the process. Some of you may want to be redesignated as Friends; others of you may want to move directly into the level you held while in the Society of St. Seraphim of Sarov. However, moving into the equivalent level within the Monastic Fellowship will also require you to begin working on the goals and expectations of that level (and all the previous levels) so that you can become the core group for those who follow after you, especially where the use of Saint Brendan's Breviary and Saint Brendan's Rule of Life is concerned.

We want to grow together as a monastic family. We want to be given back in monastic service and prayer to our communities. We want to be vessel of monastic holiness and joy to our churches. We want to be given back in monastic sacrifice to God. Pray with us that Saint Brendan's can be used of the Lord as a faithful vehicle for those purposes.



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