

# The Navigator



The Newsletter of Saint Brendan's Monastic Fellowship

Volume XVI – Winter 2020

## BE THE PEACE

Sue Andreaeas, Prioress

*"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

John 16:33

"I just want a little peace and quiet." "Can't you leave me in peace for a few minutes??" "Why don't we all just get along for once!!" We are all looking for that space in our lives that is calm and without conflict. Our lives are stressful and chaotic. The news creates a whole new level of 'wars and rumors of wars' that undoes the peace we seek as Christians. The world seems to contradict His kingship, but that's just it. It *seems* to. But doesn't. The problem isn't with Jesus, it's with our desires (demands?) and expectations. We WANT people to get along, for the bickering and fighting and warring to stop. We want an end to the unrest and fast pace of our To-Do list. Disagreements amongst family members and co-workers, conflicting information, sickness, lack of rest. All these things seem to wreak such havoc in our lives that we often begin to wonder if there can even be peace on earth. If you are asking if the world can knock it all off and come to a place where people and events align with no conflict, I'd have to say no. The world is under the influence of sin. Our sin. And sin has added a dimension to God's Creation that is very much in perpetual conflict!! But, if you remember, that list of Fruit of the Spirit is nei-

ther earthly nor individual traits. The Fruit of the Spirit reveals the part of heaven that can exist in us if we make room for it to exist. Heaven's peace on earth is not a lack of conflict because it is not based on external stimuli. Instead, it is based on heavenly stimuli.

We are human BEINGS, not human DOINGS. There is a part of us called the psyche, or soul. It is comprised of our thoughts, memories, desires, will, imagination, emotions—THAT part of us. Our spirits already belong to heaven if we belong to Christ. (That's how we can be holy even while on earth. Our spirits have been regenerated—reborn. HALLELUJAH!!) Our bodies are made of the dust of the earth, the corrupt part of creation that



will die. Our psyche, or soul, hangs in the balance between these two worlds, sometimes participating in heavenly 'being,' and other times participating in earthly 'doing.' The Fruit of the Spirit becomes part of us as we teach our souls to let go of earth, relinquishing them to heaven. (This is the part of our salvation that we must work out with fear and trembling!) Heavenly desires. Heavenly emotions. Heavenly will. Heav-

enly imagination. Heavenly memory. It's not just wondering what Jesus would DO, but how Jesus' interior life would BE. So, let's return to the verse above and plug that idea into it.

We often quote the last part of the verse that appears at the top of this article. "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." We use it as a sort of proof

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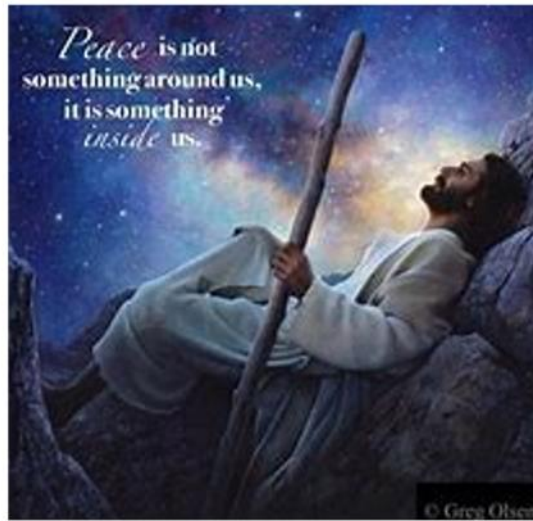
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text—to ‘prove’ our lives are ‘normal’ because we have trouble. We use it to convince ourselves that our trouble doesn’t mean we’re not Christians, and that no matter what rock and hard place we find ourselves between, Jesus can overcome it; that He can help us fight our way out. But to put this verse into that context is to interpret it incorrectly. Jesus has already overcome the world! And the peace He talks about in the first part of this verse has to do with the things He had been telling the disciples earlier in the chapter, not the ‘trouble in the world’ part. Jesus had been explaining to His disciples that He’s about to leave them. This teacher they had followed, Who had become their friend, Who called them away from families and careers, was going to ‘come into hard times.’ Things were going to get so bad that these closest friends of His would not be able to bear it. They would flee from Him and scatter apart from one another. He would die, but He would return. (Can you imagine how little sense THAT made to them before Christ’s resurrection—an event that never happened before!?) He loved His disciples enough to tell them not only that He knew what they were thinking about His cryptic comments (this happens earlier in the chapter), but that He knew how the coming events would affect them. Jesus told them what HE was going to do, and what THEY were going to do because of it. Why? So that they might have peace.

How can peace come from the kind of chaos that murders loved ones and destroys relationships, career choices, world views? The events of Holy Week make our little lives appear very insignificant! Yet, if we read Scripture carefully, we learn

**“The Fruit of the Spirit reveals the part of heaven that can exist in us if we make room for it to exist.”**

that we also will have trouble. The world will hate us because we belong to Jesus. We will experience fiery trials, be disowned and shunned. We may be put to death, and all because we love Jesus! Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, has warned us that these things will happen. Why? So that we may have peace—so that we may steady our souls in heaven rather than have them shaken apart by earth!



I’m not saying that if you love Jesus your day will be less hectic, your family will stop bickering, your co-workers will always agree, and your house will be calm. I don’t think Jesus makes any promises about changing those parts of our lives! What I’m saying is that you now KNOW that your emotions will be hurt, your willpower tested, your imagination pulled in many opposing directions. You have now been warned that the world will try to shift what you desire away from what God desires for you—that your soul will feel the tug of temptation because the world wants you to participate in its insanity. Jesus has told you that those things are going to happen. And now, through prayer, meditation, fellowship and worship, you can prepare. You can seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness. Jesus has warned you so that you can hold your course and be at peace—maintain heaven’s identity of who you are and what you are called to do. That ability to stand with Christ no matter what the world throws at you... THAT is the peace of Christ, the Fruit of the Spirit. There can be peace on earth, Christ’s peace. But only if it can reign in who you ARE, and not just in what you DO.

Rejoice!  
Sue Andraeas

### MONASTIC MUSE

**muse** \ ‘myüz \ **1:** *vb* to turn something over in the mind meditatively, **2:** to think reflectively, **3:** *n* a state of deep thought...

**“There is never any peace for those who resist God.”**

—François Fénelon (1651-1715). French archbishop, theologian, poet, and writer.

**“Men of peace usually are brave.”**

—Spock, son of Sarek, “The Savage Curtain” (Stardate 5906.5).

## FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: LONGSUFFERING

Fr. Alan Andraeas, Prior

*"Never take your own revenge, beloved,  
but...overcome evil with good."*

Romans 12:17-19

Of all the characters in A. A. Milne's world of Winnie the Pooh, I think Eeyore is my favorite. Not just because I can do a great imitation of his voice, but because he's a lot more than a glass-half-empty, pessimistic misfit. Rather, he has an abundance of...longanimity. Long-a-what?! Yeah, it's a real word based on Latin roots and literally means a *long soul*. Look up this word in any dictionary and its entry would read, "a disposition to patiently bear with injuries and injustices." In Eeyore's case, it was living without a tail (Owl had found it and was using it as a pull rope for his doorbell!). That wonderful quality was eventually grafted into the rest of his character's storyline.

If only our lives were scripted by someone else so that noble qualities could be 'written' or hardwired into our characters and personalities. It doesn't quite work that way, though. While Scripture says that all our days recorded in God's book before any of them come into existence (Psalm 139:16), this is simply a declaration of His divine foreknowledge. What those days consist of, however, is often a matter of our own authorship, particularly when it involves the Fruit of the Spirit. As Saint Brendan's *Rule of Life* says on page 20, "Producing fruit is a life-long exercise of intentional faith, and often takes a lifetime to perfect. It is the evidence of Christian maturity."

Nestled within the Fruit of the Spirit of Galatians 5:22-23 is the one we wish wasn't there: yep, the biblical version of longanimity based on Paul's use of the Greek word, *mak-*



*rothumia*. Many Bible translations render it as the word patience, but that's the normal translation of the Greek word *hupomonē*. This, however, is NOT the word Paul uses in his list for the Fruit of the Spirit. Earlier Bible versions translated *makrothumia* as longsuffering (e.g., Bishop's Bible, 1568; Geneva Bible, 1587; King James Bible, 1611), but it seems that all modern translations prefer the word patience. Is this perhaps an unconscious attempt by translators to make the English text more palatable for contemporary readers? After all, a life characterized by patience seems a lot more agreeable than a life trapped in perpetual longsuffering. [Yes, even Bible translators can be subtly influenced by their own bias, worldview, comfort level, and personal theology!] What, exactly, does *makrothumia* mean?

Technically speaking, *makrothumia* is a compound word consisting of two parts. The first part is *makro*. Today we would say macro (as opposed to micro), like a macro lens on a camera for long-distance photographs. *Makro*, then, simply means long in either time or distance. The second part is *thumia* which can be translated as passion or sacrificial forbearance (think, the suffering endured by Christ on Good Friday; i.e., the 'Passion' of Christ). At the core of *thumia* is the root word *thuo* which means to sacrifice or engulf and consume by fire. And this is based on an even more ancient root word, *thu*, which literally means to burn, smolder, or smoke. [For those linguistic types who love words, this is also the basis for our liturgical terms *thurible* and *thurifer*—can't burn charcoal and incense without them! Cool, huh?]

What, then, is longsuffering? I wish I could say that it's simply another synonym for patience, but it's so much more. It was first used by God Himself as He declared Who He was to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:6, LXX), describing the controlled restraint of His righteous wrath and linking it to His mercy, grace, forgiveness, and truth. Is this important for us? You bet it is! Take a look at Psalm 78:38-39, "He often holds back His anger and does not stir up His fury" because He remembers "that we are made of flesh."

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### WE COVET YOUR PRAYERS!!!

Please continue to pray for Saint Brendan's and these various needs:

- For necessary remodeling of the Priory House so that we can host more retreatants and guests.
- For the continuing interior construction Holy Trinity Chapel, including flooring, wheelchair ramp, and interior of the Sacristy.
- For discernment as we continue to define and refine Saint Brendan's role in the Body of Christ and this local community.
- Ongoing medical concerns.

“...our exercise of longsuffering will help to transform our own natural inclinations toward temper and vindication into something that honors the life of Christ within us.”

When this passage in Exodus 34 was translated from Hebrew into Greek in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC as part of the version we know as the Septuagint or LXX, at least 70 Greek scholars involved with the translation grappled for an equivalent of the Hebrew *erekh' aPavim*. They eventually rendered it as, you guessed it, *makrothumia*. And each time this Hebrew phrase shows up in the Old Testament, it's always translated into the same Greek word. And every time longsuffering appears, it is always linked to God's compassion, forgiveness, goodness, and mercy—it's like a package deal (Numbers 14:18, Psalm 86:15, Jeremiah 15:15). In fact, throughout the Old Testament, longsuffering is ONLY used as a description of God's character. It's not until the New Testament that we see it finally shifting to something that God's own children should emulate in themselves.

God's character becomes the example for our own human longsuffering (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Not that we're called to offer a blanket dismissal of wrongs toward those who hurt or abuse us, but that we extend a postponement of rightful judgment or punishment against them for the greater hope of their repentance and restoration (cf., Romans 2:4-5; 9:22-ff). In fact, as a Christian, longsuffering is an active attribute of our love (1 Corinthians 13:4) and a necessary quality for Christian service (2 Corinthians 6:6). After all, it's hard to represent Christ if we walk around in the bitterness of being constantly offended! In fact, the Apostle Paul reminds us that longsuffering is not just an internal mindset but an external attitude that others can see as clearly as if we are wearing new clothes (Colossians 3:12-13).



But that's not all. As much as longsuffering is a part of how we are to act Christlike toward those who have caused unjust suffering to us and others, it also helps us to persevere as we await Christ's return and the remedy He brings with Himself for all things (James 5:7-ff). That becomes the day of the great 'handoff' as we finally "let go and let Christ" (as the saying goes). That makes longsuffering a fruit which is both immediate and forward-looking; temporal and eschatological. If we believe that Christ's coming is close-at-hand, we are encouraged to forestall our angry feelings or desire for 'payback' and embrace, instead, a steadfastness which can be its own witness toward those who wrong us (1 Peter 3:14-16).

In the end, while there are certainly times when decisive action must be taken in the face of wrong (and the Holy Spirit will reveal to you when those circumstances occur), the witness of Christ is often better served when we surrender those outcomes and actions into the hands of God (Romans 12:17-21). Who knows? Perhaps that intervening time produced by our longsuffering will be used by the Holy Spirit to bring about change, repentance, or restoration to those who would otherwise taste God's punishment (cf., 2 Peter 3:9). And if they don't change, then our exercise of longsuffering will help to transform our own natural inclinations toward temper and vindication into something that honors the life of Christ within us. And as Eeyore would say, "That accounts for a good deal;...it explains everything."

Rejoice!  
Fr. Alan

Be still, my soul! the Lord is on thy side;  
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
Leave to thy God to order and provide;  
In every change He faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul! Thy best, thy heavenly Friend  
Thro' thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

"Be Still, My Soul"  
Words, Katharina von Schlegel; Music, Jean Sibelius.

**The Final Word: St. Gregory (330-395 AD)** — One of the three Cappadocian Fathers and Bishop of Nyssa. He was also the brother of St. Basil the Great. This is an extract from his treatise, *On Christian Perfection*.

We may call ourselves true Christians only if our lives express Christ by our own peace. Gloriously has God slain enmity between Himself and us in order to save us; may we never risk the life of our souls by being resentful or by bearing grudges with others. We must be reconciled not only with those who attack us from outside, but also with those who stir up dissension within.

Now peace is defined as harmony among those who are divided. When, therefore, we end that civil war within our nature and cultivate peace within ourselves, we become peace. By this peace we demonstrate that the name of Christ, which we bear, is authentic and appropriate. When we consider that Christ is the true light, having nothing in common with deceit, we learn that our own life also must shine with the rays of that true light.

Now these rays of the Sun of Justice are the virtues which pour out to enlighten us so that “we may put away the works of darkness and walk honorably as in broad daylight.” When we reject the deeds of darkness and do everything in the light of day, we become light and, as light should, we give light to others by our actions.

If we truly think of Christ as our source of peace, we shall refrain from anything wicked or impure in thought or act—for the poison of enmity is gone—and thus show ourselves to be worthy bearers of His name. For the quality of peace between ourselves and God, and ourselves and others, is not shown by what we say but by what we do in life.



## Life at The Priory House



Wintertime at Saint Brendan's allows us to slow down in some respects; in others, it's a different kind of activity. We were richly blessed as we celebrated Thanksgiving and the Incarnation of Jesus. Sue is now teaching psychology as an adjunct faculty member of the Washington County Community College in Calais, ME. And I'll soon be lecturing on the role of naval chaplains during the Civil War at a Civil War Roundtable gathering in Freeport, ME. The daily chores continue. The snow has come. We've added extra weekly celebrations of the Eucharist in the chapel. And overall, life is good. Here are a few pictures...

**TOP LEFT:** One of our Fellowship members, Dennis Maloney, ObsB, blessed Holy Trinity Chapel with beautiful pieces of Orthodox iconography he has written. All three are shown on the altar—the Holy Trinity (Jesus in the center and the Holy Spirit on the right with heads turned down in deference to the Father on the left as the mountain peak bows in reverence to the Godhead; the cross with the Corpus of Christ; and Saint Benedict, whose Rule of Life we try to live by here at Saint Brendan's. If you're looking at the PDF version, zoom in on the picture; the icons are beautiful! **TOP CENTER:** We were able to get a nice picture of the two of us along the bank of the Denny's River before the snow and ice set in. **TOP RIGHT:** Ah, a warm and toasty fire in the woodstove! There is nothing better than wood heat on a wintery Maine day!!

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**DON'T  
FORGET!**

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

This is the time of year when we review and renew our membership list for Saint Brendan's. Since there are no annual dues or forms to fill out, PLEASE make every effort (by the end of February!) to notify us by phone, letter, or email that you would like to remain a part of the Fellowship. Otherwise, your name will be removed from our lists

and this will be your last newsletter. Members will continue to receive our quarterly newsletters and have access to all of our study guides, The Breviary, and the Rule of Life. Members can also visit Saint Brendan's for retreat and contact us for prayer and spiritual direction. And remember, because there are no dues, we are always grateful for your gifts to help defray our administrative and ministry costs.

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