

## AGM January 2023

We are six months away from our 2023 Annual General Assembly, time to remind one and all that in order to participate in parish elections for the vestry, our by-laws require that one be active in the parish for at least the six months preceding the AGM at which elections will be held. What 'active' means precisely is not specified, so we have set up the following criteria.

- 1) Attendance at services on a regular basis, in person or on line;
- 2) Regular Financial Contributions to the Parish (plate, pledges, etc.)

This has nothing to do with your membership, only your eligibility to participate in the election of new members of the Vestry by nominating a candidate, being a candidate, or voting.

For those unable to attend regularly because of infirmity or illness, but still want to vote, please contact a Vestry member or one of the clergy.

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## ST. BENEDICT'S RULE (last part)

**I**f ever evil thoughts occur to your mind and invade your heart cast them down at the feet of Christ and talk about them frankly to your spiritual father or mother. Take care to avoid any speech that is evil and degenerate. It is also well to avoid empty talk that has no purpose except to raise a laugh. As for laughter that is unrestrained and raucous, it is not good to be attracted to that sort of thing.

You should take delight in listening to sacred reading and in often turning generously to prayer. You should also in that prayer daily confess to God with real repentance any evil you have done in the past and for the future have the firm purpose to put right any wrong you may have done.

Don't act out the sensuous desires that occur to you naturally and turn away from the pursuit of your own will. Rather you should follow in obedience the directions your abbot or abbess gives you, even if they, which God forbid, should contradict their own teaching by the way they live. In such a case just remember the Lord's advice about the example of the Pharisees: accept and follow their teaching but on no account imitate their actions.

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**SAINTS:**

**Clare of Assisi. 11 August.** Born in 1193 in Assisi of a wealthy family, Clare caught the joy of a new vision of the gospel from Francis' preaching. Escaping from home, first to the Benedictines and then to a Béguine-style group, she chose a contemplative way of life when she founded her own community, which lived in corporate poverty understood as dependence on God, with a fresh, democratic lifestyle. Clare became the first woman to write a religious Rule for women, and in it showed great liberty of spirit in dealing with earlier prescriptions. During the long years after Francis' death, she supported his earlier companions in their desire to remain faithful to his vision, as she did. Some of her last words were: "Blessèd be God, for having created me."

**Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down & Connor. 13 August .** Jeremy Taylor was born in Cambridge in 1613 and educated there at Gonville & Caius College. He was ordained in 1633 and, as the Civil War got under way, he became a chaplain with the Royalist forces. He was captured and imprisoned briefly but after his release went to Wales, where the Earl of Carbery gave him refuge. He wrote prolifically whilst there, notably *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living* in 1650 and *of Holy Dying* the following year. In 1658 he went to Ireland to lecture and two years later was made Bishop of Down and Connor. He found many of his clergy held to Presbyterianism and so ignored him; and the Romans rejected him as a Protestant. In turn, he treated both sides harshly. His health was worn down by the protracted conflicts and he died on this day in 1667.

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No one should aspire to gain a reputation for holiness. First of all we must actually become holy; then there would be some truth in having a reputation for it. The way to become holy is faithfully to fulfil God's commandments everyday by loving chastity, by hating no one, by avoiding envy and hostile rivalry, by not becoming full of self but showing due respect for our elders and love for those who are younger, by praying in the love of Christ for those who are hostile to us, by seeking reconciliation and peace before the sun goes down whenever we have a quarrel with another, and finally by never despairing of the mercy of God.

These, then, are the guidelines to lead us along the way of spiritual achievement. If we follow them day and night and never on any account give up, so that on judgement day we can give an account of our fidelity to them, that reward will be granted us by the Lord which he himself promised in the scriptures: what no eye has seen nor ear heard God has prepared for those who love him.

The workshop in which we are called to work along these lines with steady perseverance is the enclosure of the monastery and stability in community life.

## Psalm 33

**Response: *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.***

13 The Lord looketh down from heaven, and beholdeth all the children of men; \* from the habitation of his dwelling, he considereth all them that dwell on the earth. 14 He fashioneth all the hearts of them, \* and understandeth all their works.

**Response: *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.***

17 Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, \* and upon them that put their trust in his mercy; 18 To deliver their soul from death, \* and to feed them in the time of dearth.

**Response: *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.***

19 Our soul hath patiently tarried for the Lord; \* for he is our help and our shield. 20 For our heart shall rejoice in him; \* because we have hoped in his holy Name. 21 Let thy merciful kindness, O Lord, be upon us, \* like as we do put our trust in thee.

**Response: *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.***