

Reflections on my life as a hermit

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In the past several years I continue on my journey as a hermit. With the help and guidance of bishop Noël Delaquis and with the monthly meetings I had with Archbishop Albert Le Gatt, I celebrated my consecration as a hermit in 2013, an act that confirmed liturgically my vocation to the eremitical life in the Church. At the time of my consecration five years ago, Archbishop LeGatt asked Bishop Noël to carry on being my director. A spiritual director is a safeguard for a hermit to help in discernment for there are many challenges the hermit must face in his desire to love God from which all else flows. The greatest challenge for me has been proper self-understanding.

Liturgy is an important aspect of my life and I celebrate all of the monastic hours: Vigils, Lauds, Terce, Sext, None and Vespers. When celebrated with the understanding that all the necessary authentic content for personal growth is there, personal growth can follow.

My day usually starts about 4:30-5:00 AM and ends in the evening about 9 PM with the celebration of Compline (night prayer). Through the day there are regularly scheduled times for Liturgy which include the Eucharist on Sundays and occasionally through the week and depending on the season. Dotted through the day are times for prayer, meals and reading. Then there is cleaning, laundry, washing dishes, cooking, usually in quantity, and freezing of meals. Doctor and dentist trips are as needed; there is shopping to do; once a month trip into Winnipeg for some meetings including with Bishop Noël Delaquis. It can a busy lifestyle.

For the hermit, silence and solitude are the principal means to find God. Inner silence – poverty in spirit – creates the empty space necessary to experience God's presence in his heart, which transcends all words. So, what distinguishes the life of a hermit is not in his works or his accomplishments, it is what God does in him, as he abandons himself to His Love. His job is to be an alter Christus in a way that gives meaning to: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, mind and soul" just as a priest (hierarchy) gives deeper meaning to loving "your neighbour as yourself".

The whole of a hermit's life helps him to live in God's presence: liturgy, work, study, superior and community, all done in a climate of silence and solitude. Separation from hospitality is an integral part of the hermit's life. This frees up the hermit to embrace his role for the spiritual welfare and the growth of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Hermits have no special prayer method or technique; the only way is Jesus Christ. In the contemplative life it is not so much what we do that is important but how we allow God to work in us and to transform us. Our task is only to purify our longing of all that is not God. The hermit is free to follow any Catholic Spirituality, as it was done in the past with the Desert Fathers, Rhineland Mystics, Saint Ignatius, Saint John of the Cross, Saint Teresa, Saint Francis de Sales and others.

The greatest hindrance in the search for God is without a doubt one's own will. A hermit attempts to renounce his self-will with the help of the vow of obedience which comes from the Latin word: "to listen". My obedience is to Archbishop LeGatt and his appointed representative, Bishop Noël Delaquis.

Like all vocations, being a hermit demands a decision and purpose. To enter into silence, he must be called to it, he must want it, and he must know why he wants it. If he intends to become a man of silence, he must assume responsibility for his quest.

