



Blessed Be

April 2021

Welcome to this edition of Blessed Be. In these times of stress and suffering, I hope and pray you find some measure of hope and, through hope, strength and peace. Should you wish to share anything that has inspired you, I would love to hear from you at helenmacauley@gmail.com

*I came across a reference to this passage in **Ecclesiastes 3:18-22** and thought I'd share it with you:*

I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth? So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

Continuing the animal theme....

Let a man fear, above all, me, his God, and so much the gentler will he become toward my creatures and animals, on whom, on account of me, their Creator, he ought to have compassion.

Bridget of Sweden

There is not an animal that lives on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but they form communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they all shall be gathered to their Lord in the end

Quran 6:38

Seest thou not that it is Allah Whose praise all beings in the heavens and on earth do celebrate, and the birds (of the air) with wings outspread?

Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise, and Allah knows well all that they do.

Quran 24:41

By steadily disciplining the animal nature, until it becomes one pointed, it is possible to establish conscious awareness of The Eternal.

Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. I hold that the more helpless a creature the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of humankind.

Mahatma Gandhi

The Rule of St Columba.

St Columba (521-597) was an Irish monastic who established monasteries in Ireland and then later on Iona in Scotland. From there he travelled to the Scottish mainland where he conducted missions to spread Christianity to the local population. While he left no written rule, this was written down by his followers following his death.

- * Be alone in a separate place near a chief city, if thy conscience is not prepared to be in common with the crowd.
- * Be always naked in imitation of Christ and the Evangelists.
- * Whatsoever little or much thou possessest of anything, whether clothing, or food, or drink, let it be at the command of the senior and at his disposal, for it is not befitting a religious to have any distinction of property with his own free brother.
- * Let a fast place, with one door, enclose thee.
- * A few religious men to converse with thee of God and his Testament; to visit thee on days of solemnity; to strengthen thee in the Testaments of God, and the narratives of the Scriptures.
- * A person too who would talk with thee in idle words, or of the world; or who murmurs at what he cannot remedy or prevent, but who would distress thee more should he be a tattler between friends and foes, thou shalt not admit him to thee, but at once give him thy benediction should he deserve it.
- * Let thy servant be a discreet, religious, not tale-telling man, who is to attend continually on thee, with moderate labour of course, but always ready.
- * Yield submission to every rule that is of devotion.
- * A mind prepared for red martyrdom [that is death for the faith].
- * A mind fortified and steadfast for white martyrdom. [that is ascetic practices] Forgiveness from the heart of every one.
- * Constant prayers for those who trouble thee.
- * Fervour in singing the office for the dead, as if every faithful dead was a particular friend of thine.
- * Hymns for souls to be sung standing.
- * Let thy vigils be constant from eve to eve, under the direction of another person.
- * Three labours in the day, viz., prayers, work, and reading.
- * The work to be divided into three parts, viz., thine own work, and the work of thy place, as regards its real wants; secondly, thy share of the brethren's [work]; lastly, to help the neighbours, viz., by instruction or writing, or sewing garments, or whatever labour they may be in want of, *ut Dominus ait, "Non apparebis ante Me vacuus* [as the Lord says, "You shall not appear before me empty."].
- * Everything in its proper order; *Nemo enim coronabitur nisi qui legitime certaverit.* [For no one is crowned except he who has striven lawfully.]
- * Follow alms-giving before all things.
- * Take not of food till thou art hungry.
- * Sleep not till thou feelest desire.
- * Speak not except on business.
- * Every increase which comes to thee in lawful meals, or in wearing apparel, give it for pity to the brethren that want it, or to the poor in like manner.
- * The love of God with all thy heart and all thy strength;
- * The love of thy neighbour as thyself

- * Abide in the Testament of God throughout all times.
- * Thy measure of prayer shall be until thy tears come;
- * Or thy measure of work of labour till thy tears come;
- * Or thy measure of thy work of labour, or of thy genuflexions, until thy perspiration often comes, if thy tears are not free.

*From A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland II, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1873), pp. 119-121.
(<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/columba-rule.html>)*

Prayer of St. Columba

Let me bless Almighty God,
whose power extends over sea and land,
whose angels watch over all.

Let me study sacred books to calm my soul:
I pray for peace,
kneeling at heaven's gates.

Let me do my daily work,
gathering seaweed, catching fish,
giving food to the poor.

Let me say my daily prayers,
sometimes chanting, sometimes quiet,
always thanking God.

Delightful it is to live
on a peaceful isle, in a quiet cell,
serving the King of kings.

The closer one approaches to God, the simpler one becomes.

Teresa of Avila

Empty yourself of everything.
Let the mind become still.

The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self watches their return.
They grow and flourish and then return to the source.
Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way of nature.

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching

Be a Gardener. Dig a ditch. Toil and sweat.
And turn the earth upside down. And seek the deepness. And water plants in time.
Continue this labour. And make sweet floods to run, and noble and abundant fruits to spring.
Take this food and drink, and carry it to God as your true worship.

Julian of Norwich

What's not to love about Brigit of Kildare?

I should like a great lake of ale, for the King of Kings. I should like the family of heaven to be drinking it through time eternal.

Pray, even if you feel nothing, see nothing. For when you are dry, empty, sick or weak, at such a time is your prayer most pleasing to God, even though you may find little joy in it. This is true of all believing prayer.

Julian of Norwich

Pay bad people with your goodness; fight their hatred with your kindness. Even if you do not achieve victory over other people, you will conquer yourself.

Tolstoy

May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received,
and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be content knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones,
and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.

Teresa of Avila

