

Before it was ever known as Turvey Abbey in the eighteenth century, this site was known simply as Turvey Farm or Farmhouse and, until the mid-twentieth century, was indeed, a working farm, almost, that is, until the nuns acquired the farmhouse and the monks the farmyard next door. And, today, we celebrate the day the first monastic office was said upstairs in the converted stables which are now the guest-house of the Monastery of Christ Our Saviour – Christ once more dwelling in a stable, or so we hope if we are true to our vocation as monks and Christians. For the gist of today's readings is that we are now, as Christians, the body of Christ; the locus of God's presence on earth; the inner part of the Temple located, now, not in any particular building, but in the people of God. Where the people are – there is God. This is an extraordinary claim considering our weakness and fallibility; the imperfection of the people among whom God has chosen to dwell. But it works in so far as God's Spirit is allowed free reign – is given a chance to make us holy. And that, I think, is the draw, not only for ourselves, but for all who come to Turvey to this particular locus of God's presence. And what we are celebrating today, to paraphrase St Paul trying to settle the various rivalries which beset the Church of Corinth, 'Stop thinking of yourselves as followers of this or that guru, as better than others because of this. You are merely God's farm or field and God is the one who farms this field; the one who makes it productive, a '*river of life*' to touch on that other metaphor we have heard today. So it's God we praise and not ourselves as we go with the flow of God's Spirit.

Br John Mayhead  
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour