

With age our compass narrows: we can't do everything as easily as before. Indeed, we come to realise we can't do everything as we might have imagined we could do earlier. Our range of choice is increasingly limited. We become more aware of our own and earth's passing nature and there is joy in this in that we don't have to carry the world's burdens forever. But this sense of the yoke becoming easier and the burden light is a gift available to us all through faith forever and it's unconditional. It was there for Abram the moment he lets go of his own hopes and ambitions and follows the Lord's command to leave his country, his kindred and his father's house for a country God will show him. It was there for Paul in his autobiographical advice to the Philippians with the added incentive to keep practising what one preaches or believes, so that we grow into it and it becomes part of us – who we are in the Lord – including the joy – prayer and petition shot through with gratitude. And John's gospel is full of it. The synergy between ourselves and Christ which makes joy possible. Meister Eckhart will carry this act of faith to an extreme in advising us to be entirely unconcerned with not only our own will but God's will, too, for then we fully trust in Christ's coming to birth in us, on a parity, perhaps, with his ever- begotten status in God. It's difficult language but there it is in John:

*with me in them and you in me
may they be perfect in unity
that the world may recognise that it was you who sent me
and that you loved them as you have loved me.*

And there it is also in St. Gregory the Great's account of the passing of St. Benedict – full of joy because heaven and earth are joined. And we pass forever from one to the other. Passing is what we do – or rather it is what is done to us – it's the dynamic of love.

Br John Mayhead
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour