

*“ When our soul ( our ground) is so pure, naked and bare then God is compelled to pour Godself into us the moment when we are found ready. It is then that we become fruitful and the Son is born in us. All things become simply God to you, for in all things you notice only God, just as a man who stares long at the sun sees the sun in whatever he afterwards looks at.” (Meister Eckhart)*

This may help with Paul's emphasis on celibacy and the other readings detailing how the author of all things gives authority to others including Jesus. We can also characterise this as taking part in a process of gift, or better perhaps, a process of appropriate gift, a gift given for the moment, to meet a need, to do a work that is needed. And this said because we are full of inappropriate needs and desires which the devil or the demagogue is only too ready to appropriate. Just look at our present situation where it's becoming increasingly difficult to discern truth from untruth, truth from half truth, truth from the mass and the mix of information and disinformation which is coming at us all the time. Even emails present a problem now; one can't be sure that one isn't being gulled into a train of correspondence which will eventually part one from one's money, or worse. I am very suspicious of any sentence that begins " Hi there...." or equally the telephone message which begins with " Hi John and how are you today?" and so on. And especially as robots join in the fun. Just give me a human being please whom I can trust, who is open to nuance, who knows how to love. And there we have it- the discernment between good and bad spirits – those of God and those not. Those of God are not about simply collecting numbers to their cause, even less about personal empowerment. Their focus is finding the word that enlivens and heals, that gives hope in the most hopeless of situations, that gives meaning in the face of death, even their own. It's a word spoken from a gentle and humble heart, both high- born and lowly, with one eye on heaven and one eye on earth. So celibacy isn't about being removed from earthly concerns but about being more available to people in their real need – seeing heaven in ordinary, discerning what is essential from what is inessential. But this can come through marriage too. It's the art of love, of being available to another.

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Put simply, availability to others is all about availability to God and vice versa. So we can enter the dance at any point, when all things, all people, become simply God to us.

Br John Mayhead

Monastery of Christ Our Saviour