

It's become extremely busy in the monastery in the last few days. Female hairy footed flower bees have been visiting nest sites in the mortar by the tunnel to the abbey next door. Ashy mining bees have been sparring on the front lawn, three long- tailed tits are building a nest in the honeysuckle by the back gate- yes you heard right – there are three of them at work, previous young or even neighbours helping out, it can take up to three weeks so they need all the help they can get (there's a sermon there in itself) and yesterday there were Red Mason Bees visiting the Bee Hotel at last and on the front door light a species of moth entirely new to me, a Nut-tree Tussock. So I've been driven indoors in order to get this homily written - all creation speaks of God, or can do, but there are times when one has to focus more exactly on the Word, on what God is telling us in that unique mode of discourse that only humans, so far, have been gifted with. Words can of course still get in the way but it's this type of focus, this search for God's word to us in Christ which demands a single-minded intent, a love which brooks no distraction. Mary and the Beloved Disciple demonstrate it in John's gospel. Mary's search privileges her as the first to find the empty tomb and later, as she lingers in the garden still in search of Jesus, to an encounter with her newly resurrected Lord. The Beloved Disciple reaches the tomb first in his hurry to confirm Mary's finding, but although he then allows Peter to enter first it's still the Beloved Disciple who first comes to faith, to that knowledge of God which only love can reveal. And lastly we have the story of Cornelius, a pagan but an upright and God-fearing man, whose love is rewarded by not only a visit from Peter but by a visit from the Holy Spirit coming down on himself and the whole of his household much to their surprise, and even more so to Peter and the other Jewish disciples. Great things are happening here to those who know how to love, how to search for God whether through prayer and worship or in their service of their neighbour. It's an experience of resurrection open to us all. Or to end with one more quote from Ian McGilchrist (and you may be glad to know that I've now finished the book, though I'm not sure that it's finished with me). This is from page 1289 with a quote at the beginning from the medieval Flemish mystic Jan Ruusbroec; it is

*“God in the depths of us who receives God who comes to us: It is God contemplating God’.*

*This has nothing to do with a supposed master – slave relationship. Instead it is, like awe and wonder, not an abasement but an ecstasis...a standing outside oneself while still being oneself. We are both united with something greater than ourselves, in which we share, and simultaneously aware of the separation, in which one feels one's smallness: the union of division and union.”*

(The Matter with Things p1289)

Or; in the words we heard from Paul's letter to the Colossians

*“ Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on earth, because you have died and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.” -*

just like the flowers of the fields or the mining bees or the long-tailed tits un-self consciously revealing God, revealing Christ, by simply being what they are – with no other focus but life – things of heaven after all.

Br John Mayhead

Monastery of Christ Our Saviour