

## PRAYERS FOR GUIDANCE

*Teach me, Lord, to seek you  
And show yourself to me as I seek.  
I cannot seek you unless you teach me  
Nor find you if you do not show yourself to me.  
May I seek you in desiring you  
Desire you in seeking you  
Find you in loving you  
And love you in finding you.*

St Anselm

*Search me God and know my heart  
Test me and know my thoughts.  
See that I follow not the wrong way  
And lead me in the path of life eternal.*

Psalm 138

## WHERE TO FIND US

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## MONASTIC LIFE AT STANBROOK ABBEY

*Some questions and answers*

*We desire to seek God in a life of prayer and worship, living in community with the Rule as guide and upheld by mutual love which creates unity in diversity.*

*As Benedictines, we express this search for God in the balanced rhythm of Prayer, Lectio/Study, Work. We desire to live a life of Gospel simplicity and in all things to foster an attitude of moderation and humanity in a true liberty of spirit.*

*We believe that from the silence and seclusion essential to the life of prayer, and from fidelity to monastic tradition, flow the ability to be open to the contemporary and the freedom to change the outward expression where necessary *in* response to the Spirit ... .*

Statement agreed by the Stanbrook Community, August 2000

*It is love that motivates them...*

Rule of St Benedict 5:10

### **Q. What work do you do?**

**A.** Our main work is prayer. In both public worship and personal prayer we lift up the cares and concerns of the whole world to God. This is done partly through intercession but principally by our growing in union with God through Christ whose love for the world is beyond measure. St Benedict tells us (RB, Prologue 17) to *make peace your quest and aim*, so we see ourselves also as peace-makers in a troubled world. True peace must be sown in the human heart before it takes root in society. Prayer is not confined to the time spent in church. It pervades all the areas of our work from cooking the dinner to welcoming guests, as any task done for the love of God becomes a prayer itself (See 'A Day in the Life of...' on the website for more details and current timetable.)

### **How can I tell whether I have a monastic vocation?**

Each vocation is unique but a common indication is a sense that God is asking this of us. You may feel that you want to give your whole day to God rather than simply a short time at the end of the day. Such feelings tend to persist with greater or lesser intensity over a long time. A Benedictine vocation is often marked by a strong attraction to one particular monastery.

### **What should I do?**

We need help to discern a vocation. Perhaps speak with a priest or vocations director; certainly make contact with a monastery. Above all, ask the Holy Spirit for guidance. It can help to talk with a close friend but it is not always wise to pour out to too many people, particularly in the early stages.

### **How long does it take to become a nun?**

At Stanbrook, five and a half years minimum from entrance to taking final vows. Most candidates get to know a monastery well before applying to enter.

### **What are the entrance requirements?**

One should be single and Roman Catholic with good general health and post-secondary education or training. It is desirable to have had some broad experience of life through work or travel perhaps. A sense of humour and ample grit are also essential! There are no hard and fast age limits - we look at each case individually.

### **Can you outline the various stages involved?**

After a period of getting to know the community, those considering a monastic vocation may apply to spend three weeks in the enclosure. The formal application to enter the monastery involves the provision of two references, a medical certificate of health and a psychological assessment.

After about 6 months living with the community as a postulant, two years are spent as a novice learning about the Rule, prayer, scripture, theology and liturgy. There is also practical training in Chant and Latin. Then there are three years as a junior in temporary vows, during which time studies continue.

Personal initiative is encouraged at all stages of formation and with Solemn Profession comes the opportunity to take part in decision-making as a full, permanent member of the community.

Ongoing formation continues after profession and all are encouraged to develop areas of interest - studies, arts & crafts, music etc.

### **What are the particular features of life at Stanbrook?**

For all Benedictines the search for God in the context of community is paramount but each monastery has its own stamp. We have tried to summarise our values in the short statement on the front of this leaflet, though one can often catch more of the character of a monastery from the lives of its members past and present. Visit the 'Past' section of our website ([www.stanbrookabbey.org.uk](http://www.stanbrookabbey.org.uk)) or better still, come and visit us in person.