

Reflection Tuesday week 27 St Bruno 2020

St Bruno (c.1033 - 1101) was born in Cologne and educated in Reims where he became head of the episcopal school. In 1075 he was appointed chancellor of the church of Reims and devoted himself to administering the diocese. Bruno was involved in the final decision made by the Pope to depose its corrupt bishop, Manasses. Although recognised as the obvious successor in 1077, he and two of his fellow-canons abandoned the world and entered religious life. He joined St Robert, at Molesme, and gathered followers around him. They later became the Cistercian Order. However, in 1084, with six of his companions, he approached St Hugh of Châteauneuf, Bishop of Grenoble, who sent them to Chartreuse, in the mountains near Grenoble. They built a small monastery where they lived in deep retreat and poverty, entirely occupied in prayer and study. In 1088 one of Bruno's pupils from Reims became Pope Urban II and continued the reform begun by Gregory VII. In 1090 Urban summoned Bruno to Rome to help. Narrowly avoiding being elected bishop again, Bruno managed to persuade the Pope to let him resume the solitary life. He founded a new monastery in Calabria, and for the rest of his life led an amphibian existence, being called away from time to time to help the Pope in his project of reform, but always returning. Bruno pioneered the "mixed" form of religious life, of hermits who live together in a community. He did not plan to found an Order, but the seed he had planted at Chartreuse grew into the Carthusian Order.

Mary, in today's Gospel, strikes one as being a contemplative, needing to spend time with the one who inspired her. Christian contemplation is described as *a form of prayer or meditation in which a person seeks to pass beyond mental images and concepts to a direct experience of the divine*. Contemplation could focus on a person, nature, a painting, music, poetry etc. Rather than seeking understanding, creating images, it is an experience of *being with*. When two people are deeply in love, they do not need to speak to each other; being present to each other is more than sufficient. It is uplifting, energising, reassuring, inspiring and so much more. Many of those who came to listen to Jesus, came not just to hear what he said, or see what he did but to be with him. The experience embraced them, warmed them, affirmed them. When they left his company, they walked on air. Becoming aware of God's presence is the beginning of contemplation and can happen while out walking, encountering others, at work. It can even happen while preparing a meal!!!!

A vegetarian meal . . .

Chap goes for a meal in a vegetarian restaurant. The waiter asks him, "*How was your meal, sir?*" He says: "*It was very nice, thank you. Give my compliments to the gardener.*"