

THINGS

Have you ever noticed how inanimate objects seem to multiply? I love those signs you now see all over the place: 'Self Storage'. Sometimes I would love store myself, a sort of hibernation, a bit of peace and quiet maybe. Misreading things can be fun—unless you happen to be reading aloud in the chapel at the time. Some years ago we got a leaflet in the letterbox: 'Doorstep Deliveries', I felt there was a limit to how many doorsteps one could cope with.

We arrived at Turvey from Cockfosters in 1981 with a mixed multitude of objects accompanying us, mainly because we didn't really know what we would need and what we wouldn't need, and people had been generous to us. Back then there was no Emmaus Village at Carlton, but slowly we disposed of the excess, well almost all of it. Thirty-six years have passed since then, and the tide of things has ebbed and flowed. Of course, some of us collect more things than others, I'm a things person, I can usually find half a dozen uses for almost anything, it would be boring if we were all the same.

In his Rule Saint Benedict talks with common sense and wisdom about the things his monks could have, he actually draws up a list of what he considers they will need. His take on equality is very interesting, he doesn't say equal amounts of everything for everyone, he does say that they are to be treated equally with regard to getting what they need, some will need more, some less—and no one is to grumble about it—or about anything else for that matter.

Whilst times have change since Saint Benedict wrote his Rule, his exhortation to look after things well is as relevant today as it was then. In Chapter 31 of his Rule Saint Benedict writes of the monastery cellarer: 'Let him regard all the utensils of the monastery and its whole property as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar.' and in Chapter 32: 'If anyone treats the monastery's property in a slovenly or careless way, let him be corrected.'



We seem to be living in an age where lots of things are not made to last, and many things are not repairable, so perhaps there is less incentive to look after things. But if we do look after them we can at least nip up to Emmaus with the excess, and it gives a good excuse for a look around and for cup of coffee, and, of course, to buy something else to fill up the space we've just created.

Oops, Saint Benedict didn't mention coffee at Emmaus in the list of things his monks could have. It's true, we do have a different lifestyle at the Abbey, but I think St Benedict would have been very enthusiastic about Emmaus—and would have occasionally had a coffee there.

Three cheers for Emmaus Village, Carlton!

Sr Benedict, [Turvey Abbey](#)