

+

Brother Teilo Rees

31 March 1931 - 20 September 2021

Our Brother Teilo's life can be summarised in one single word that he used so often, 'Wonderful'.

This expression was not just a word, it contained his whole life. When Teilo expressed this wonderful word he really meant it. It came from his heart, it radiated in his eyes and you could feel it in the way he pressed our hands.

Brother Teilo was born in Carmarthen, and he was always very proud (and rightly so!) to identify himself with Wales and everything Welsh - but nevertheless...Teilo had in so many ways a very English upbringing as he went to Harrow School and to Cambridge, and before he entered the Abbey on Caldey he lived comfortably near Kew Gardens. His deep sense of culture prevented him from becoming a nationalist. Teilo was in so many ways the embodiment of authentic humanness. His language skills enabled him to become connected and to remain connected with so many people from all continents. You name it: French, German, Italian, Latin and Greek, Spanish, Turkish, Russian...for him it was not a show-off but he knew that through the language he could pursue his heart's desire. He always yearned for meaning. You could see him avidly reading the Sacred Scriptures, the Revelations of Divine Love by Julian of Norwich...but also Lord Byron (he knew e-v-e-r-y-t-h-i-n-g about him!) and the Inspector Morse novels by Colin Dexter, whom he knew in person when he studied in Cambridge...

And yet, whilst cherishing all these treasures, the heart of Brother Teilo yearned for Wales, he yearned for simplicity, he longed for the monastic life in Wales, and one day he knocked on our door, and he kept knocking with great determination because he was aware that his age was not entirely in his favour. Or was it? Yes, in fact it was utterly in his favour as his heart was fully alive and committed from the very outset.

'The brother who is simply content with what he finds in the monastery should be received for as long a time as he wishes', says Saint Benedict in the Rule. It is without any doubt that our Brother Teilo has been content exactly where he was, day-by-day, among his brothers, in sacred reading, in silent prayer and helping the brothers with doing the chores within the monastic household. Life was always 'Wonderful' to him, and that could only be so as his whole being was filled to the brim with wonder.

May his wonder continue to shine on all and each of us!

