

Sunday after Ascension, 13th May 2018

I hope you will excuse me if in the course what I am going to say I appear to speak too much about the Benedictines, but please don't let that put you off! Anyway, here we are in a parish run by the Benedictine monks of Downside Abbey; in a church dedicated to a Benedictine Bishop of Worcester, St Wulstan; with the medieval Benedictine Priory of Little Malvern a bit further down the hill; and, when you come to think of it, I myself might also have something to do with the Benedictines! Last October, you might have watched the series, *The Retreat: Meditations from a Monastery*, on BBC 4, featuring both Downside and Belmont. During the Belmont episode, there was a scene from our daily chapter meeting, in which we read a small section from the Rule of St Benedict. The section which was read on the TV programme, chapter 57 of the Rule, ended with the words: "that in all things God may be glorified".

These words accurately translate those in St Benedict's original Latin text of the Rule: "*ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus*". Two weeks' ago, we talked about mottos on sundials, and this phrase from the Rule in fact is also a motto: indeed a motto for the entire Order of St Benedict, for monks and nuns throughout the whole world, as well as those inspired in some way by the Benedictine tradition. You sometimes see "*ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus* (that in all things God may be glorified)" abbreviated to the acronym: U.I.O.G.D. And yet you might be thinking: I thought "*Ora et labora* (Prayer and work)" was the Benedictine motto? The true of the matter is that, although it has a nice ring and rhyme about it, "*Ora et labora*" was coined in the nineteenth century; almost yesterday for a tradition which stretches back to St Benedict and the sixth century! A better claimant to be the Benedictine motto is "*Pax inter spinas* (Peace among thorns)", usually depicted simply as "*Pax*" with the thorns visibly surrounding it. An example of which can be found outside St Benedict's Chapel at Belmont. And yet this too is nowhere to be found in the actual Rule of St Benedict.

It is however the motto, "*ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus*", or U.I.O.G.D. for short, which is taken straight from the Rule, and which also has the added weight of being taken straight from the pages of Holy Scripture, from today's Epistle in fact. Though there is a slight difference between what we heard in the chanting of the Epistle of blessed Peter the Apostle, "*ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus* (that in all things God **may be honoured**)" (1 P 4:11), and the motto, "*ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus* (that in all things God **may be glorified**)" (RB 57), and you don't have to be much of an expert to work out what it is. For some reason St Benedict uses "*glorificetur*" rather than "*honorificetur*", which begs the question: does it really matter? Not particularly, though it does show that it wasn't the Latin Vulgate of St Jerome that he used here but some other Latin translation. It also shows, when

looking at the original Greek of the Epistle, the close proximity between being “honoured” and being “glorified”. St Peter speaks in his Epistle of “δοξάζεται”. I emphasised the first two syllables, “δοξά-”, because they immediately make me think of ‘glory’ (δόξα), as in ‘doxology’, an expression of glory to God; as seen in the so-called ‘Greater Doxology’, the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, and in the ‘Lesser Doxology’, the *Gloria Patri*, both of which make an appearance in the Mass.

So it would seem that St Benedict was indeed right to render it as: “that in all things God may be glorified”. However, I forgot that δόξα can mean ‘honour’ as well and, more importantly, also ‘opinion’ or ‘belief’, which in fact was the original meaning of δόξα; since it originates from the Greek word for ‘to think’. This double meaning of ‘glory’/‘honour’ and ‘opinion’/‘belief’ is vividly illustrated in the word ‘orthodox’, composed of ὀρθός (‘right’) and of δόξα: ‘orthodox’ therefore signifying ‘right glory’ (and, in that sense, ‘right worship’), as well as ‘right belief’. And so we can claim to be just as ‘orthodox’ as those Eastern Christians who like to be called so. Indeed, the rightness of our worship, of our liturgy, should be a fitting expression of the rightness of our belief: “*Lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of praying [is] the law of believing)”. Keep an eye out for “*orthodoxis*” towards the beginning of the Canon later on at Mass.

At the end of the Canon, the priest elevates the host for a second time, though this time over the chalice, for the minor elevation, saying quietly: “*omnis honor et gloria* (all honour and glory)”. Here together we have those two words related to δόξα, ‘honour’ and ‘glory’: and certainly the end of the Canon is very much a doxology, perhaps the ‘Greatest Doxology’, in comparison with the ‘Greater Doxology’ of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. It might be interesting also to note that in the English of the new Mass the order is reversed: so instead of “all honour and glory” there is “all glory and honour”, probably because it sounds better; which just goes to show that it does not really matter in which order they come, given that they amount pretty much to the same thing. The unity of “glory and honour” is additionally observed in both the English and the Latin by the use of “is yours (*est tibi*)” rather than “are yours (*sunt tibi*)”. This at first may seem grammatically incorrect, using the singular “is” rather than the plural “are”, but it is perfectly legitimate in both languages; since “*omnis honor et gloria* (all honour and glory)” is taken here as a single unit rather than as two separate words, and so the singular “is” can be deployed.

Whether it is said that “God may be honoured” in all things or, as specifically stated in the Rule of St Benedict, “glorified” in all things, we nevertheless strive to do just that and take it for our motto, whether we are Benedictines or not. The Jesuits, by the way, have an almost identical motto: “*Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (To the greater glory of God)”, also reducible to an acronym: A.M.D.G. As in “*ut in omnibus*

glorificetur Deus (that in all things God may be glorified)", its expressed purpose is precisely doing everything to the "glory of God". Sir Edward Elgar wrote out A.M.D.G. at the beginning of the score of his oratorio, *The Dream of Gerontius*. Not surprising, given that his local church, St George's, Worcester, was then run by the Jesuits. About fourteen centuries previous to this, St Benedict had included "that in all things God may be glorified" at the end of chapter 57 of his Rule, the chapter on 'The Artisans of the Monastery'. Whether we are in a monastery or not; whether we are artisans, or even artists like Elgar, or not; may we begin everything to God's glory and honour. Amen.



**KEEP
CALM
AND**

**AD MAJOREM
DEI GLORIAM**