

## The Beginning

Looking out to the assembly of the priesthood with hands in the air, Bartholomew rested his hands on the railing in stillness. This allowed the reality of their praises going forth to The Great One to soak into his being. It was a magnificent day with the sun tucked between two large puffy clouds as it shone lightly on the courtyard. He entered back into the Monsignor's office to the sound of the question, "Come to a decision yet about who shall accompany you?"

Bartholomew looked back at the Monsignor with loving approval, "Patience. All things in The Great One's timing."

"You are correct in what you say, but surely, He has shown you someone by this time. It has been over twenty days . . ."

Bartholomew calmly replies, ". . . And I will wait another twenty if required. However, rest assured, the seeker who will accompany me has been revealed."

The Monsignor smiled, "Perfect. Who is he?"

Bartholomew replied, "Patience, my dear friend. For you were always quick to make decisions in times past. I see the Great One uses me to test the waters of your character even now. Though seeing the exceptional qualities of your leadership, I know why you are the Monsignor and I am not."

"Yes. Well, why not tell me who your partner is on this journey so I can pray accordingly?"

"Simple. Though a candidate has been selected, it doth not mean he is ready for the journey."

“This is precisely why I should pray.”

“Go right ahead, but The Great One will test and prove the priest in mind while refining him for the task he has been given. Besides, if word got out . . . Let me do as I feel led as discretion will be needed ‘til we leave.” Bartholomew is compassionate in his gaze.

“Well, you are probably correct as my mind doth slip from time to time. You know me well, old friend. Thanks be to our Great One who has given you wisdom from on high. You have always been such a blessing to me. How will I get along while you are away?” the Monsignor had asked while propping his head above his desk with his elbow.

“You will be fine. The Great One proves as a better console than me, old friend. Need I remind you how you have been a mentor to me? Remember, a little faith in him can move mountains.”

The Monsignor bursts into prayer, “Great One, thank you. By Your council, You continue to provide direction for your servants. Now, fill our hearts with an abundance of perfect love this day. Fill us to overflow as an outpouring to gently touch the lives of those around us. Glory be to thee, our Great Spirit of Truth!”

Bartholomew pauses ‘til a prayer finds his lips, “Great One, settle us in peace and give us your perspective. Continue to guide us moment by moment. For what You teach us brings life when practicing your presence daily as our hearts are knit together in perfect love here. Cause me to be still and I will rest

from all of my anxious fears before You. Cast them away from me. Keep me walking in the obedience of Your love. For in all I suffer, I am blessed by Your higher wisdom which comes by light to brighten my mind. Amen.” Their prayers stop just as the assembly finishes praying, too. “Amen” is heard throughout the monastery.

Bartholomew recalls all as he looks down from above with his bird’s eye view, standing blind before the brethren who have gathered.

## The Story

There are tales, my brothers, but as I present the facts, you'll have to discern for yourselves as to whether they be true. "What are you trying to tell us, Marcus?" asks brother Thomas.

The Monsignor looks down from his balcony and says, "Be patient and listen to him, for he has quite a story to tell, which I'm sure you will learn from." He then returns to his study. Marcus continues, "Let me gather my thoughts, brothers, and you shall learn all I know." All then look to Marcus who begins to paint pictures on their minds.

"The journey Bartholomew and I undertook completely shook apart my understanding. Believe me, all the knowledge I have of the Great One within my innermost being is no longer the same. The Great One has taken me apart and reassembled the essence of my earthen soul by the grace of His good will. The story of our journey begins outside of the province of Calington at our monastery. I considered myself to be an unworthy choice, but Bartholomew chose me by the Great One's guidance. We both have learned much in the way of wisdom, which I will be sharing with you.

First, a prayer to the Lord of all light shall open our minds so the truth be well received, "Oh, precious Lord of Truth, knit our hearts together and lead us in peace. Let the telling of my tale bring life and truth to its present hearers and any who know how to listen in the future. May my tongue speak truth by the

union of Your Spirit through Your New Covenant in my vessel. Praise, honor, and glory to You, oh Great One. Amen.”

All at once, my mind was overwhelmed by a flood of memories from our journey which seemed to deprive me of my peace. “Lord, be my light!”

Those who have a hearing ear let them hear. My story begins with me hurrying from the courtyard up the staircase to the second level of the monastery. I hurry to a large room with many books and scrolls neatly tucked away on wooden shelves.

I met the curator who looked up from reading a scroll to address me, “My-my . . . Back already? You really have your mind set on taking in the scrolls don’t you, Marcus?”

“I know the Great One lives within the words of these scrolls when the Spirit draws life from His covenant.”

“Yes-yes, a good idea, but take heed to commune with the Great One through prayer and not just his Word.”

“Though I understand what you say, I still must study to show myself approved.”

The curator looks on with a smile, “True.” I make myself comfortable as the curator curiously asks, “Well, what scroll would you like to study from?”

I answered straight away, “The scroll of Romans.”

“Here you are.” He takes the scroll from the far left shelf and hands it to me. I take the scroll and eagerly sit down in a chair next to a long table with plenty of candles. I had read the scroll of Romans the other day. It is good to be acquainted with a scroll and read it again. This allows my mind to be in the state

of a tilled field and once well plowed, The Great One sows seeds of life into me through communing with Him in His word when all is still. The Monsignor gave me this piece of wisdom. I have taken it to heart and have put it into practice during my recent studies of the scrolls.

In my past, I desired to seek after words of life in the scrolls which stemmed from an encounter I had with the Great One. I was younger when this encounter occurred and I remember the simpler times well. Since then, I have matured to enjoy His presence in other ways. Well, one day while basking in His presence, I spoke out into the air, "Lord, I love you. Your presence is my joy!" His thought spoke to my mind, "*Do you desire to be closer?*" I hesitated for a moment, but then I replied, "Yes." The Lord spoke again, "*Read my Word and give up trying to understand them your way.*" Ever since then, I knew the voice of the Great One would guide me on how to draw even closer.

In reading the scroll of Romans, these words in my spirit clung to my heart, "No one is righteous, not even one. No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. All have turned away; all have become useless. No one doth good, not a single one." These words stung me as I acknowledge their truth through my own being and now, there is no way to please the Great One by having words without action. So, I rely on His grace to lead me by His Spirit to the deeper path of His presence and even desire to read His word, for the scroll also states, "I know nothing good dwells within my man of flesh." Here I stop to let the weight of

these words take root. I pray, “Oh Great One, by the majesty of your Spirit, bring light to your words and ignite my life again. I must not remain in the dark any longer but see the truth of how You speak them in Your deeper way.”

The Spirit led my mind to understand the words of life through this thought: there was a man who stumbled across a well unlike any other he had seen in his life. The well had the word “pleasure” engraved in its side. He decided to draw a bucket up from the well to drink. Once he tasted the water from the well, it tasted so good and was better than anything he had ever tasted before. So, he drew more water from the well. He drank again and again and again. Each time, he needed more water to gain the same pleasure he had tasted at first. It was at this moment the man realized he was aging. He was a young man when he started drinking, but before long, he aged greatly.

The man continued to draw water from the well. The manner in which he drew the water then became quick and violent. His desire for the water had consumed him. He began complaining about why the water had to be in a well and why it couldn't be in a lake to give him greater ease of drinking. The man took another bucket full and struggled to bring it to his lips. He was now feeble and yet still did not realize the water was killing him. Finally, after his last drink, he died. No one ever believed this old man laying here dead was a young man only a few hours before.

There are spirits which offer pleasure for the body, but it only lasts for a breath. Realize the natural state of man. It is a

simple thing to keep living towards desires without seeing the end. Yet, the love of the Great One will last forever. Life is always brought forth when partaking of His presence in a relationship with him. Know Him in His waters and He will guide you to quench any thirst. He brings living in eternity as a drink which provides an everlasting life. You will never thirst when you understand His abundance and how it leads to the Spirit which will satisfy you. For in order to have life, you must understand our souls need to hold the words of His Spirit to replace our flesh. Desires of the body lead to destruction and the leading of the right Spirit brings fullness of life. For, if one seeks to please the flesh of his inner being, he experiences fear. It is when it leads to not seeing in darkness, there is much envy which produces a malice and hatred to stir up strife. Then all of this bitterness gives one a desire to die. However, when seeking life in the Spirit through a commingling of communion with the Great One, there shall be the peace of a joy which will go beyond any love of flesh. Our hope is to have faith within his inner being to conquer all manner of spirits which create blindness. For he who loves and longs for death is born after the flesh, but he who loves life is born from the Spirit of the Great One.

“Marcus, Marcus!” Startled, I turn and see the curator who says, “The time is late. I am closing the archive for the night.”

“Amazing, it feels as if I entered the archive only moments ago!”