

# DOWNSIDE ABBEY

CONSIDER YOUR CALL



Monastic Experience Retreats

For young men aged 18 – 35

## MONKS OF DOWNSIDE

The monks of Downside invite you to explore your faith and the possibilities of Christian vocation by sharing in the life of their monastic community.

The community began its life 400 years ago in Douai, now in France, and arrived at Downside in 1814. From the beginning of its history, we have combined the life of prayer, work and study in the monastery with the wider service of the Church, through various forms of pastoral work, including parishes. Through our school we have tried to bring up young people to a love and understanding of their faith as well as to an awareness of its call to service.

As part of our Benedictine work we welcome guests and try to help them on their journey of faith by sharing with them the wisdom of the monastic tradition, the peace of the monastery and its grounds, as well as our common life of prayer and worship.

## MONASTIC EXPERIENCE RETREATS

This series of retreats is for young men to reflect on how God may be calling them to serve him, as well as to examine the implications and challenges of following such a call, and how to deepen the life of prayer we need to do so.

Some of those who have been with us before have had pretty clear ideas about a vocation to the priesthood, religious or monastic life. Others have not, and some are only beginning to think about the personal implications of making faith the foundation of their lives. These retreats aim to help men thinking about the path of their lives and how God fits into the journey. The themes of each retreat are broad enough to allow room for everyone.

## CALLED BY GOD

God calls each of us to seek and find him in the service of our Lord and of his Church. That may be in the ordinary life of lay Christians, it may be through marriage. Some he also calls in a special way to his service in spreading the Gospel and in building up his family through the ministry of the word and of the sacraments, as well as through personal holiness and a life of prayer. Our happiness as Christians is found in living our lives towards God, and we discover our freedom in his service. So people who want to take their faith seriously will naturally find themselves thinking what God is asking them to do with their lives.



# Monastic Experience Retreats 2009

## March 20th – 22nd: Benedict

What does a 6th century saint have to offer us in the 21st century?

## June 19th – 21st: Journeys

How can faith make sense of my life?

## September 25th – 27th: Foundations

How can I build my life on rock rather than sand?

## December 18th – 20th: Light in the darkness

How can I find direction and hope from Jesus' birth?

You are welcome to extend your retreat, either before or after the weekend.

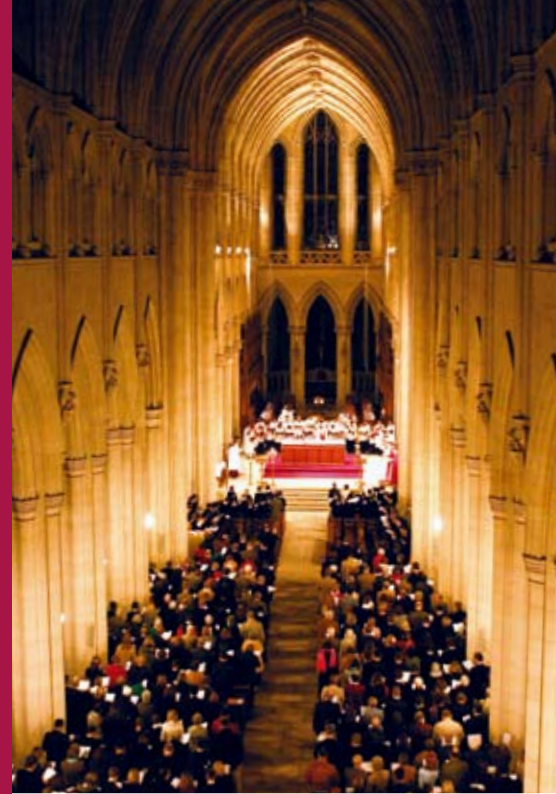
Please contact Dom David to arrange this.

For more information please visit [www.downside.co.uk](http://www.downside.co.uk)

## Alternatively...

### Monday 28th September – Friday 2nd October

A whole week in the monastery. No formal talks, but a chance to get into the rhythm of life and share in manual work. A chance to do some reading or walking, and to talk informally with the monks.



## OR A PRIVATE VISIT?

If you cannot make one of these retreats, why not think about coming at another time? The Monastery Guest House is open nearly all the year and gives a chance

- for a few days' peace and quiet
- for private retreats
- for study breaks using the monastery library

All retreatants are welcome to share in the Office and Mass with the monastic community and male guests join the monks for meals in the monastic refectory. The grounds and gardens are available for walking and fresh air, with the Mendip countryside beyond.

For more information, please get in touch with Dom David.

Tel 01761 235162 Email [domdavid@downside.co.uk](mailto:domdavid@downside.co.uk)



## DETAILS AND BOOKING

If you want to book a place on any of these retreats, or receive further information on all vocations retreats or other opportunities to stay at Downside Abbey, please contact: Dom David Foster:

Downside Abbey, Radstock, (near Bath), BA3 4RH

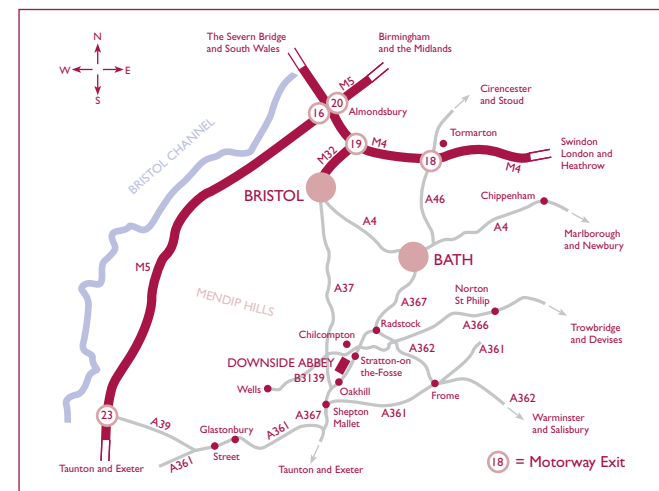
Tel 01761 235162 Email [domdavid@downside.co.uk](mailto:domdavid@downside.co.uk)

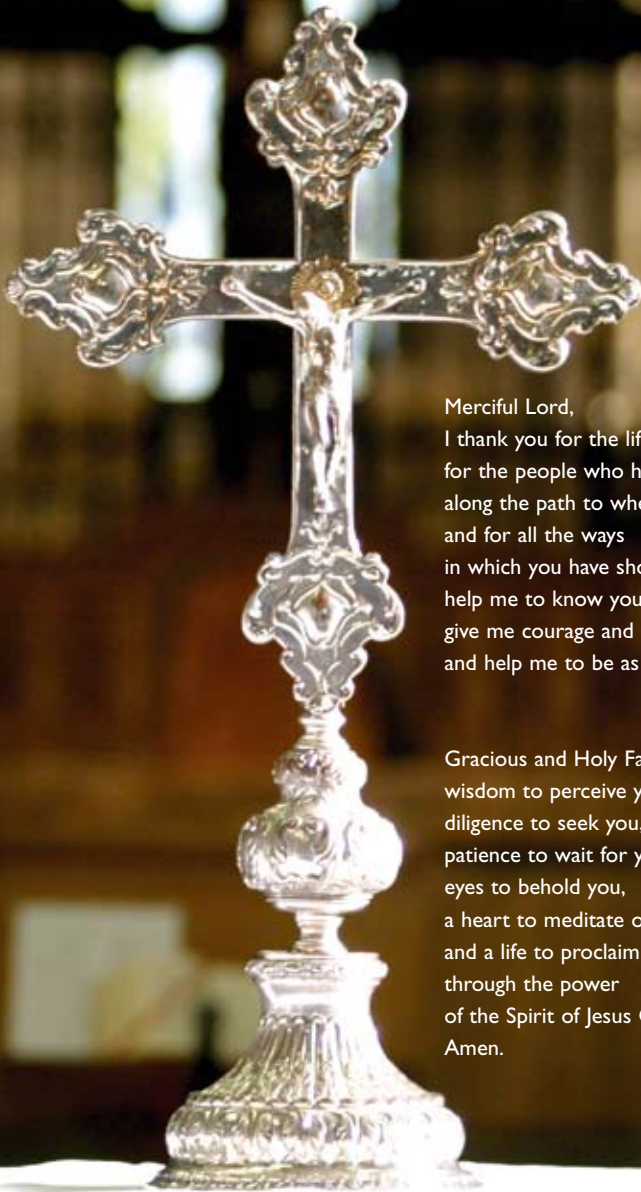
## HOW TO GET TO DOWNSIDE

Downside School is in Stratton-on-the-Fosse, twelve miles south of Bath. The School is about two hours' drive from London, from where there are also fast and frequent trains. The most convenient railway station for visitors from London is Bath, twenty minutes' taxi journey from the School. Visitors arriving by train from the North, Midlands and West should use Bristol's Temple Meads station, which is about half an hour from Downside. There are regular buses from Bath to Frome (184) and Wells (173) stopping in Stratton on the Fosse and Chilcompton (Co-op) respectively.

## COSTS

We do not charge for hospitality in the Guest House, but guests may leave a donation if they wish. Any cheques should be made payable to Downside Abbey Trustees.





Merciful Lord,  
I thank you for the life you have given me,  
for the people who have helped  
along the path to where I am,  
and for all the ways  
in which you have shown your love to me:  
help me to know your will,  
give me courage and hope in your faithfulness  
and help me to be as generous as you.

Gracious and Holy Father give me  
wisdom to perceive you,  
diligence to seek you,  
patience to wait for you,  
eyes to behold you,  
a heart to meditate on you,  
and a life to proclaim you;  
through the power  
of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.