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Cloister and Community

Katharine Massam

Concepts of place have a resonant history within monasticism. Touchstones of monastic life often have a spatial dimension: stability and pilgrimage, boundaries and hospitality, even the balance of solitude and corporate life. Paying attention to the way monasticism is lived, in and across spaces, enlivens our understanding of the values that inform it. As Philip Sheldrake has suggested for monasteries in general, the cloister in particular is what Foucault might have called a *heterotopia*: one real location that represents several different sites at once.[1] Balanced by controlled entry between isolation and accessibility, a *heterotopia* throws other locations into relief and challenges definitions of normal. Foucault had in mind museums, libraries and Japanese gardens representing a cosmos within themselves, but for the medieval world the cloister also stood at the heart of the monastic commitment, and on at least one reading, *was* that heart.

This essay outlines the development of the medieval cloister as an architectural form, for nuns as well as monks. Acknowledging the "spatial turn" in the humanities more broadly, I

[1] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" (1967) cited in Philip Sheldrake, "The Practice of Place: Monasteries and Utopia," *ABR* 53 (2002): 10, n.18.

explore the “cloister” as part of the paradox in Christianity where any particular location is potentially both a place of encounter with God and a liminal boundary between “here” and the “beyond” of discipleship.[2] In tracing concerns to set aside the space and also to protect and control it, I argue that the cloister was not only a real and specific location, but also a space that carried allusions beyond itself. The cloister reflected choices within the monastery and also became a resource for those choices and a value in monastic life.

The monastic cloister echoed with meaning in the Middle Ages. It continues to resound with significance today, not only in religious communities that maintain a physical cloister but also beyond them. As political responses to the refugee crisis of the twenty first century falter and churches in Australia revive the ancient pledge of “sanctuary” in the face of threat,[3] the cloister remains potent as both a haven and a source of faithful discipleship.

Place, Space and Values

As the British theologian Timothy Gorringe observes that, “to be human is to be placed.”[4] Bodies take up space, being a person involves “being there”,[5] and building shelter is an intensely human activity. For the Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius (d. 15CE), writing in the first century BCE, humanity became itself by building, and the geometry of the human body became the geometry of classical architecture, re-discovered by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) in the

[2] Key resources include Philip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory and Identity* (Baltimore, ML: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Belden Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: geography and narrative in American spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

[3] Justin Glynn, “Offers of sanctuary brighten Australia’s refugee dark age,” *Eureka Street* vol. 26 (2), http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=45954#.V0Y2W2Y3JFU Accessed 25 May 2016; Peter Catt, “Why I Offered Sanctuary to Asylum Seekers,” *The Melbourne Anglican*, 26 May 2016. http://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/opinion/sanctuary-peter-catt-230316 Accessed 25 May 2016.

[4] Timothy J. Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

[5] Phillip Sheldrake, *Spaces for the Sacred: place, memory and identity* (Baltimore MY: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 7, draws on Martin Heideggar to elaborate this. See Heideggar, “An Ontological Consideration of Place”, *The Question of Being* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), 26.

Italian Renaissance and remembered now by proponents of human-scale "vernacular" town planning in Scandinavia and elsewhere.[6] When we build shelters, we build symbols.

"Bodies themselves generate spaces" argued Henri Lefebvre in 1991.[7] His path-breaking work on *The Production of Space* warned against overuse of the term "space" by linguistic philosophers who gave too little attention to the human decisions that create both intellectual and physical realities. His firm reminder of the need to bridge mental and material space, not least by attention to everyday life, pointed to market halls, porticos, sportsgrounds, cemeteries, houses and basilicas as well as cloisters as places "produced by and for" the "ritualised and codified gestures" of human bodies.[8]

The monastic cloister shared a monastic language with the monks; it produced and was produced by a set of ritualized gestures (of walking, reading, praying, working).[9] Lefebvre sees it as "a grand creation" in which signs and symbols give physical expression to a worldview, "mooring a mental space… to the earth"[10] and sustaining practices of that flow from that mental space.

> Here, then is a space in which a life balanced between the contemplation of the self in its finiteness and that of a transcendent infinity may experience a happiness composed of quietude and a fully accepted lack of fulfilment. As a space for contemplatives, a place of promenade and assembly, the cloister connects a finite and determinate locality

[6] Marcus Vitruvius Pollio. *The Ten Books of Architecture*, trans. Morris Morgan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 38 (2.II.i); on da Vinci see M. J. Ostwald and John R. Moore, *Disjecta Membra: The Architect, the Serial Killer, his Victim and her Medical Examiner* (Sydney: Arcadia Press, 1998); on contemporary theology and architecture Seppo Kjellberg, *Urban Eco-theology* (Utrecht: International Books, 2000), 26; all cited Gorringe, *Built Environment,* 1-11 who promotes "vernacular" architecture as the ethical way forward.
[7] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 216.
[8] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 3-7 accuses Foucault, Chomsky, J. M. Rey, Kristeva, Derrida, and Barthes of disregarding the gap between mental and physical or social space.
[9] Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 216-17.
[10] Ibid., 217.

> – socially particularized but not unduly restricted as to use, albeit definitely controlled by an order or rule – to a theology of the infinite. Columns, capitals, sculptures – these are semantic differentials which mark off the route followed (and laid down) by the steps of the monks during their time of (contemplative) recreation.[11]

It is a simple enough point, that the environment shapes and reflects meaning, but the code is not an end in itself, rather "it reproduces itself within those who *use* the space in question, within their lived experience."[12]

Mircea Eliade's concept of a sacred location as an *axis mundi*, a metaphorical centre of the world separated from secular surrounds but linking earth to heaven, opened up discussion of place as a dynamic and a variable in spiritual encounter. With Edith and Victor Turner, who drew on the *axis mundi* to explore what they called the *communitas* of individuals formed by their experience of a site or a pilgrimage to it, Eliade implied such sites were both universal and carried a single meaning.[13] As social geographers and cultural historians as well as theologians have engaged with the experience of space and place, the many interpretations of a location and the idea of single readings has been overtaken by attention to the multiple meanings potentially embedded in a single site, and the political contest that validates some readings over others.[14] Place is multi-dimensional, and Christian theology can explore it fruitfully.

Traditionally Christian thinkers have paid more attention to time in relation to God than to place, but both are similarly complex. The distinction between the regular tick of *chronos* and

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[11] Ibid., 217.
[12] Ibid., 137.
[13] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959); Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: anthropological perspectives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978). See also the discussion in Sheldrake, *Spaces*, 5.
[14] Sheldrake, *Spaces*, 6 n.13.

the elastic experience of *kairos* as moments of revelation unfold, is relatively well-known. There is a parallel distinction to be made in relation to concepts of place captured in the Greek terms *topos* and *khora*. On the one hand there is the map, the topography of location, and on the other there is the site of encounter, the "interval" between the locations or the notes on a musical score.[15] For Christians attention to the particularity of the experience of a single place of revelation is in paradoxical tension with the reality of God who cannot be confined to local sites. There is both place, the experience of being on "holy ground", and placelessness, of moving towards what is to come. There is both the Incarnation and the empty tomb of Jesus Christ who has gone ahead to Galilee. Christianity holds that the particular is the doorway to the universal, the beyond. The unique "this-ness" of God's creation calls Christian disciples to live into the reality where all things are reconciled in Christ. The boundary between "here" and "elsewhere" is the creative place of Christian faith and action.[16]

Being secure enough to engage with others and to reflect on the world fruitfully is to be "at home." In trail-blazing work from 1958 Gaston Bachelard argued that we can take the pulse of the world more accurately if we understand the images of house and home that shape our experience of shelter.[17] Coining the term "anthropocosmic" he sought to pay attention to what he called the "poetics of space." Out of a background in the philosophy of science, he was interested not so much in the description of houses or other inhabited spaces, but in what it meant to people to inhabit a place. In particular, the symbolic universe of human dwellings as a first "resting place" not only fostered definitive relationships with wider community and reality itself at its furthest horizon, but also provided a key for reading them. As the political historian Hugh

[15] See also Katharine Massam, "Creating Space Between: Women and Mission in Oceania", in *Explorations in Practical Theology. Bridging the Divide Between Faith, Theology and Life: The Church in Oceania* ed. Antony Maher, 123-133 (Adelaide: Australian Theological Forum, 2015), http://repository.divinity.edu.au/1943/.
[16] Sheldrake, *Spaces*, 22-32.
[17] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, [1958] 1994).

Stretton would remark of Australian suburban houses in the 1970s, they deserved focussed attention because "above all, people are produced there and endowed there with the values and capacities which will determine most of the quality of their social life and government away from home."[18]

Contrasting his work as a phenomenologist with other rather more scientific approaches, Bachelard insisted that we could read inhabited spaces for the "germ of well-being" they enclose. He defined that well-being as essentially the capacity to dream, to be protected enough to slip into reverie. This shelter and safety that is the essence of a "home" for human beings also affirms the need to be sheltered, and constitutes a fundamental experience of the "non-I" that protects the "I." Bachelard's terminology invites comparison with Martin Buber's emphasis on the I-Thou relationship of humanity with God. The implicit parallel between a literal home, as the place that protects our capacity to dream and to integrate experience, and God as the home who protects our capacity to hope, and locates our deepest and most daring dreaming, is rich.

Home, sanctuary and any kind of shelter in which to dream are increasingly contested and luxurious realities. Refugee camps and detention centres are chilling examples of non-places, or "de-territorialized" sites. Like other much more benign instances (airports, freeways, supermarkets, and digital screens) they affirm function above all. The French anthropologist Marc Augé has pointed to the increasingly pervasive experience of non-places in contemporary cities, experienced as "both everywhere and nowhere."[19]

In contrast, places are specific. They both result from and sustain community, they are interwoven with personal and collective identity and history, they draw forth commitment and

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[18] Hugh Stretton, *Capitalism, Socialism and the Environment* (Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 183.
[19] Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1997), 66 cited Sheldrake, *Spaces*, 8.

aspiration.[20] Like the spiritual geography that is *Dakota* for the American writer Kathleen Norris, places enable us to "wrestle my story out of the circumstances of landscape and inheritance."[21] Like the cloister embedded with meaning to connect with the community's history and hope, places create relationships and focus energy.

Cloister in the Rule of Benedict

The cloister has a long monastic history as formative space set apart. The sixth century Rule of St Benedict used the word *claustra* twice, both times in the classical sense of a boundary that secured a focus against distraction rather than referring to a particular feature of monastic architecture.[22] Benedict's concern to set aside space for the school of the Lord's service, and consequently to restrict access from the outside and control egress from the inside, became a priority that shaped "the most enduring feature of the monastic builders" of the middle ages.[23] The internal cloister, in the form of a square courtyard surrounded by covered walkways, was set apart as "a haven of peace at the heart of the monastery."[24] It was clearly part of the monastic ideal by the early ninth century,[25] and became a powerful and enduring symbol of religious life in the West.[26]

We know very little about buildings in which Benedict's community lived, but the assumptions in his Rule are credited with shaping the central square cloister with a surrounding U of arcades that became characteristic of Western monasticism. In his instruction in the Rule on "Tools of Good Works" the enclosure itself (*claustra monasterii*) created an arena for seeking

[20] Sheldrake, *Spaces*, 9, n.22 and n. 23, 12-13.
[21] Kathleen Norris, *Dakota* (Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin: 1993). See also Sheldrake, 15.
[22] See RB 4:78, 67.7.
[23] Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 182.
[24] Ibid., 182.
[25] Ibid., 185. See also Walter Horn, "On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister," *Gesta*, 12 (1973): 42, 48.
[26] Horn, "On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister"; Paul Meyvaert, "The Medieval Monastic Claustrum," *Gesta* 12 (1973): 53-59.

God. Benedict summed up his approach to monastic holiness in chapter four by observing that: "The workshop (*oficina)* where we are to toil faithfully in all these tasks is the enclosure of the monastery (*claustra monasterii)* and stability in the community" (RB 4.78). The enclosure was spatial, but also closely linked to a quality of life that was focussed and productive within the boundaries.

Benedict's second explicit use of *claustra* in Chapter 67.7 underlined the good effect of the boundary against disruption by provisions to punish "anyone who presumes to leave the enclosure of the monastery (*claustra monasterii)* . . . without the abbot's permission" (RB 67.7). This sense of danger outside the bounds had informed Benedict's instructions to the monastery gatekeeper in the preceding chapter where a "wise" (*sapiens)* old monk was delegated to welcome the visitors and effectively given the role of managing potential disruption sensibly (cf RB 66.1-5).

Between the guarding of the boundary and the punishment for crossing it, Benedict offered his vision in chapter 66 of a self-sufficient community that would supply all that the monks needed to seek God. Here the same concept of space set aside was implied as core to monastic practice itself without *claustra* being specified. If possible everything necessary should be within the enclosure (*intra monasterium execeantur*) so there was no need to leave the space set aside. "The monastery should, if possible, be so constructed that within it all necessities such as water, mill and garden are contained, and the various crafts are practiced. Then there will be no need for the monks to roam outside, because this is not at all good for their souls" (RB 66.6-7). Benedict also used the spatial image of enclosure against disturbances in his discussion of silence in chapter 6, verse 8. His focus was on establishing a permanent but internal boundary, closed to distracting chatter. Ribald and frivolous talk was to be shut out with a perpetual ban

(*aeterna clausura*), so that the monk's mouth would be kept shut "like the door of an inner cloister",[27] and the focus made possible by silence could be maintained. The allegorical development of the cloister in the middle ages reflected a similar interchangeability between individuals and the monastic spaces that shaped their lives.[28]

As Paul Meyvaert observes, it is likely that Benedict's use of *claustra* influenced the word's connotations, so that a monk became a *claustris*, and "cloister" became synonymous first of all with the whole monastery and later with the central area of covered arcades.[29] Read allegorically, as in the influential account by Hugh of Fouilloy in the twelfth century, the cloister reminded the alert monastics of the dimensions of contemplative life. [30] The four sides spoke of love of God, love of neighbor, contempt for self and contempt for the world, and were each supported by pillars that evoked component attributes – such as preferring subjection and avoiding praise, or fame.[31]

Archaeologists and historians interested in material culture have traced the shift from a general monastic enclosure to the development of the cloister as "a monastery within a monastery."[32] From Pachomius (292-348), who built a wall around his monastery in fourth century Egypt,[33] through monastic buildings laid out with a cloister in fifth century Syria,[34] and the round enclosures of fifth century Ireland, [35] monasteries have defined their ground. On the continent, early founders converted domestic villas with characteristic courtyards into monastic

[27] Fry, *Rule of St Benedict in English*, 191, n 6.8.
[28] Ulrike Wiethaus, "Spatial Metaphors, Textual Production, and Spirituality in the Work of Gertrude of Helfta (1256-1301/2)" in *A Place to Believe In: locating medieval landscapes* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2006), esp. 140-1.
[29] Meyvaert, "The Medieval Monastic Claustrum," 53-4; Horn, "On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister," 34.
[30] On *De Claustro Animae* by de Fouilloy and other interpretations, see Christina Whitehead, "Making a Cloister of the Soul in Medieval Religious Treatises," *Medium Aevum* 67 (1998): 1-29.
[31] Whitehead, "Making a Cloister of the Soul in Medieval Religious Treatises," 3.
[32] Horn, "On the Origins of the Medieval Cloister," 34.
[33] Horn, "Medieval Cloister," 15-16, n.6.
[34] Ibid., 21.
[35] Ibid., 25, 42.

space,[36] but Walter Horn sees the Benedictine mission under Charlemagne as more important than these precedents. He argues that the cloister is a product of the Benedictine commitment to cenobitic life in the context of the medieval manor system.

> [Development of the cloister] was dependent, for one, on the rejection of the semi-eremitic forms of living of the Irish monks in favour of the highly controlled and ordered forms of communal living prescribed by St Benedict. It was an answer also, on the other hand, to the need for internal architectural separation of the monks from the monastic serfs and workmen, who had entered into an economic symbiosis with the monks when the monastery, in the new agricultural society that arose north of the Alps, acquired the structure of the large manorial estate.[37]

The self-sufficiency of the monastic house, so prized by Benedict, required the monastery to administer its own estates and employ its own workforce. The paradigmatic plan of St. Gall showed the lines of tradesmen and workshops, animals and visitors all within the monastic gates; the separate cloister was "the architectural solution allowing the monks to perform their sacred task in quarters isolated from those of serfs and laymen."[38] The cloister was then particularly important as a place of seclusion for houses that had a large resident workforce (including lay brothers for the Cistercians), and as a place of community and turning inward together for the Carthusians who gathered there from separate cells,[39] and in "houses of mercy" run by

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[36] Ibid., 48.
[37] Ibid., 48.
[38] Ibid., 42.
[39] Roberta Gilchrist, *Contemplation and Action: the other monasticism* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 198, 205.

Hospitaller groups.[40] Even the military orders retained them when they took over older houses or grouped buildings around a central space or garden,[41] while the preachers, teachers, and active groups without vows took the goal of an "interior cloister" of the heart as the model of gospel spirituality, and the form itself remained powerful as universities grew.[42] Within these variations, the paradigmatic physical cloister was 100 feet square to allow comfortable work but discourage gossip,[43] and became the unit of measurement especially for Cistercian sites to create a monastic "kit-home" of extraordinary aesthetic balance and serenity.[44]

The variations from the pattern have also interested historians. Cloisters in women's communities have been less closely studied until recently, but seem to be characterized by a lack of uniformity.[45] Roberta Gilchrist argued on the basis of initial British archaeology in 1994 that the communities of women were making choices in design of their houses that were different from men and could not be explained by their smaller size and relative poverty.[46] She points especially to the higher proportion of north-facing cloisters that may have reflected a gendered connection between women and the darker colder north reflected in the positioning of saints' images, and in some cases women's seating and burial.[47] The depiction of Mary on the right

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[40] Ibid., 19-22, 60.
[41] Ibid., 71, 75 on preceptories, fig. 38 on earlier inherited buildings, fig. 30 on later enclosed yards.
[42] Whitehead, "Making a Cloister of the Soul in Medieval Religious Treatises," 16.
[43] Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture & Economy of, & Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 1979, 246 at St Gall Monastery Plan. Codex Sangallenis 1092 http://www.stgallplan.org/horn_born/index.htm. Accessed 19 July 2010
[44] I am grateful to Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB for this point in conversation, 16 July 2010.
[45] James D'Emilio, "The Royal Convent of Las Huelgas: Dynastic Politics, Religious Reform and Artistic Change in Medieval Castile," *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, 6 (2005): 217.
[46] Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture. The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London: Routledge, 1994).
[47] Ibid., 133-149.

hand of the Cross in the rood screens of the churches also puts her on the north, or to the "right hand" in the church itself imaged as Christ's body.[48]

Reading the Cloister as Christ

The metaphorical significance of the cloister itself was important to medieval writers, and in one unusual but telling example was imagined as Christ's body. Gertrude of Helfta (1256-1302) who wrote of her spiritual experience from the 1280s was a member of an observant and talented Benedictine community probably influenced by Cîteaux in its practice.[49] The secluded places of the monastery appear in Gertrude's writing as locations of spiritual experience,[50] but she skipped over more well-known allegories of the cloister as the soul in contemplation,[51] to read the body of Christ as the cloister in which the faithful community would live. She reported that while she was singing Vespers with the community, Christ said to her: "Behold my heart; now it will be your temple. And now look among the other parts of my body and choose for yourself other places (*oficinas*) in which you can lead a monastic life, because from now on my body will be your cloister."[52] Gertrude did not know how to choose other places, protesting that she would not find rest or refreshment ("both of which are necessary in a cloister"[53]) if she left Christ's heart. Assured she could stay but should still choose other "places to have in your cloister", Gertrude chose "The Lord's feet for a hall or ambulatory; his hands for a workshop; his mouth for parlour and chapter house; his eyes for a library where she might read; and his ears for

[48] Ibid., 135, 139-43. See also Corine Schleif, "Men on the Right – Women on the Left: (A)Symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places," in *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church*, ed. Virginia Raguin and Sarah Stanbury, 207-49 (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005).
[49] Sr. Maximilian Marnau, "Introduction" to *Gertrude of Helfta: the Herald of Divine Love* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 10.
[50] For example, *Herald* 2.3 her vision near the fish pond, 1.1 her withdrawal as a child to the "perfumed garden" and "bridal chamber", 1.7 her turn to the "inmost chamber."
[51] See Whitehead, "Making a Cloister of the Soul."
[52] *Herald* 3.28.
[53] Ibid.

confessional."[54] The word *oficinas* for "place" in Gertrude's vision echoed the Rule of Benedict, and the description of enclosed corporate life. Significantly, the locations she finds in the body of Christ relate to maintaining the community (assuming the activity of hands and eyes is for the common life). Her vision is corporate not only in image but also in what it draws her towards.[55] Rather than self-absorbed mysticism she is directed to the love of God for the service of neighbor "in Christ" that the four sides of the cloister traditionally enshrined. Gertrude tells her readers that the cloister of Christ is itself the life of service.

While a papal decree of 1298 saw "dangerous and abominable" consequences for society if nuns breached their enclosure,[56] and the cloistered life as a prison for unwanted women was a reality and a literary trope,[57] Gertrude's writing, also from the end of the thirteenth century, suggests a richer reality. She points to the dynamic that Sheldrake with Foucault holds is *heterotopia*, the microcosm that holographically holds and becomes the macrocosm. Within the ordered life of what appears to have been an extraordinary community, Gertrude moved to incorporate herself into the cloister that was Christ.

Hospitality and the Heart of Christ

Gertrude's prayerful discovery of the many locations of the cloister suggests that to withdraw to the heart of Christ is to discover a new kind of openness. As "border protection" gathers political momentum around the globe, there are vital issues here. The cloister is not for any sectarian guarding of the heart of Christ; it is to enable those who gather metaphorically or

[54] Ibid.
[55] See also Pedersen, "The Monastery as a Household within a Household," in Household*, Women and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker and Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, 167-190 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).
[56] Elizabeth Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women. Periculoso and Its Commentators* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1997). The decree is Appendix 1, 131-6.
[57] Jo Ann McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 317, 321.

physically within its precincts to embody that heart. Australian churches taking decisions to provide sanctuary to refugees who face deportation have not only called on ancient privileges of "cloistered" space but also pointed to the Scriptural tradition of "cities of refuge" within, not apart from, the civic space.[58] The resident alien in Israel was not to be sequestered, but sheltered and treated with equal justice by the law. It would be a familiar spiritual trap to confine the vision of cloister (or monasticism or faith itself) to an institutional limit when its full purpose is to unsettle norms and disrupt assumptions.[59] The whole story of the cloister includes a wider vision of reconciliation for the world.

For Benedict, the cloister is closely related to the capacity to offer hospitality. There are checks and balances in his Rule to ensure the focus of the permanent community is not disrupted or undermined by guests and new arrivals.[60] Both chapter 53 of the Rule on the reception of guests and chapter 58 on the reception of new members assume the surrounding structures of monastic life remain in place. From that stability, hospitality flows. The community that is secure and at home is able to reach out. Confident of their own place in the heart of Christ, they see that same Christ embodied in the guest and the newcomer. The cloister is at the heart of community as Christ is, for the community.

cposa@yahoo.com 5/2/17 3:04 PM
Comment [1]: Marsha's comment
What about this tightening of the sentence?
Yes, re-worked here, with additional sentence before.

Theological College 5/2/17 8:58 PM
Comment [2]: Yes, thanks; re-worked here, with additional sentence before.

[58]Sean Winter, "Sanctuary for Asylum Seekers is an Offer with an Ancient Pedigree," *The Conversation,* 5 February 2016, https://theconversation.com/sanctuary-for-asylum-seekers-is-an-offer-with-ancient-pedigree-54234 Accessed 25 May 2016.
[59] Sheldrake "The Practice of Place," 12.
[60] John H. Smith, "*All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ*: An investigation RB 53.1-15 and some thoughts on its implications for today," *Tjurunga: An Australasian Benedictine Review* 88 (2016): 23-35.