

Subject: Inspirational Stories – Monk's Story

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Monk's Story

There was once a monastery that had fallen upon hard times. Once a great order, all its branch houses were lost, and now there were only 5 monks left in the mother house - all over 70 years in age.

In the deep woods surrounding the monastery, a rabbi from a nearby town had a little hut for retreat and reflection. One day, the distraught Abbot, or head monk, agonizing over the imminent death of his order, decided he would visit the rabbi and see if he could offer some advice.

The rabbi welcomed the Abbot at his hut. But when the abbot explained the purpose of his visit, the rabbi could only commiserate with him. The old abbot and the old rabbi wept together and spoke of deep things. As the abbot got ready to leave, he said to the rabbi "Is there no piece of advice you can give me to help save my dying order?" "No, I am sorry," the rabbi responded. "The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you."

When the abbot returned to the monastery, he told the monks that the rabbi wasn't able to help them, but that he did say something cryptic - that the Messiah is one of us. He told the monks, "I don't know what he meant."

In the months that followed, the monks pondered this and wondered whether there was any possible significance to the rabbi's words. The messiah is one of us? Could he have possibly meant one of the monks here at the monastery? Do you suppose he meant the abbot? Yes, if he meant anyone, he probably meant Father abbot. On the other hand, he may have meant Brother Thomas. Certainly brother Thomas is a holy man. Certainly he could not have meant brother Eldred! Eldred gets crotchety at times, But come to think of it, even though he is a thorn in our sides, when you look back on it, Eldred is virtually always right. Maybe the rabbi did mean brother Eldred.? Of course the rabbi didn't mean me- I'm just an ordinary person - yet supposing he did - suppose I am the Messiah. Oh God not me!

The old monks began to treat each other (and themselves) with extraordinary respect, on the off chance that one of them might be the Messiah.

Now because the forest surrounding the monastery was quite beautiful, people still occasionally came to visit to picnic, wander the paths, and even now and then go into the chapel.

As they did so, they sensed this aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround the 5 old monks, and seemed to radiate out from them and permeate the atmosphere of the place. Hardly knowing why, people began to come back to the monastery more frequently to picnic, to play, to pray. They began to bring their friends to show them this special place. And their friends brought friends.

And then it happened that some of the younger men who visited started to talk with the old monks. After a while, one asked if he could join them. Then another. And another.

So within a few years the monastery had once again become a thriving order, and thanks to the rabbi's gift, a vibrant center of light and spirituality in the realm.