




S S P X



Holy
Angels
Novitiate



“For the love of you, God has created so many other beautiful creatures, that they might serve you, and remind you of the love which He has borne to you, and the love which you owe to Him.”

—St. Alphonsus De Liguori



Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Greetings from Winona. Spring shows to us new life, a new birth, a renewed outpouring as all things begin to manifest their young colors. The beauty of spring is God's way of reviving and reanimating the life in nature with brilliant colors, smells and sounds of the earth reawaking to the call of the creator. Take time to notice the various shades of green, some white, some violet, some indescribable. The new and fragrant smells join these various colors to enlighten our senses so that we take notice. The lilacs, the fruit blossoms; all are exhibiting the love of the creator as he opens our mind to his work and providence. Only human beings are capable to reflect on this orchestration of beauty that God manifests each spring and summer. It is our duty to notice, reflect and praise His magnificent regeneration of nature every year. We must turn away from the electronics and noise of the world to give to God the lauds that are due to Him. Take time to notice and praise Him.

It is also fitting, at least in the northern hemisphere, that the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is celebrated in the spring, the time of new life. His body is renewed to manifest His resurrected life since He is its author. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men..." His rejuvenation of life gives us hope and confidence in his providence and protection. We indeed rejoice and praise His new life in which we share and participate in His redemptive work.

In April, just before the Ascension of our Lord, comes the rogation days, from the fifth century, in France, which asks Gods protection against calamities. The Brothers took part in the singing of the Litany of the Saints with a procession to the fields, asking God's blessings and protection.

Father Kenneth Dean, our Novice Master, helps us to understand two religious terms: the active life and the contemplative life. Enjoy his excellent article. Pass it on to a young man who may have an interest.

We recently said God speed to Brother Boniface who was asked to cross "the pond" to the United Kingdom. Brother has joined with several priests and another brother to work and teach at our school (St. Michael's) in Burghclere, South Great Britain.

The brothers will be busy during the summer, looking after our retreatants and running our farm. We raise our own "meat birds" for the table. This summer we will raise six hundred.

As always, the brothers of the Society depend on your support. We are currently looking at a big project to reroof all of our flat roofs. Leaking, rotting and out of warrantee, this project will cost us more than one hundred thousand dollars to replace them. So, we trust in your continued support to upkeep this beautiful property. The brothers pray the entire rosary daily for our friends and benefactors.

In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
Father Charles J. Ward, Rector.



The Active Life

By Fr. Kenneth Dean



Both the active life and the contemplative life can envision caring for livestock in order to provide for the necessities of the religious house or apostolate. Here, Brother Stanislaus – surrounded by chickens, which one day will be on the table.

We have all heard the terms, ‘active life’, and ‘contemplative life’. These terms normally refer to different types of religious. There are contemplative orders, and there are active congregations in the family of consecrated souls within the Catholic Church. The two terms, however, are not exclusive of one another. A contemplative religious is also active in part; and an active religious is certainly contemplative in part. However, because there are many types of souls, and many ways of serving God, the Catholic Church from the beginning, has instituted a variety of forms of consecrated life. The contemplative orders focus on prayer and penance within a monastery or convent; but within those walls they are certainly active. While the active congregations have for their purpose an exterior apostolate of some kind – yet for all their action, they must lean upon the life of prayer and contemplation which provides the grace and impetus to perform works of charity.

There is no doubt that good works which are not motivated and supported by prayer will not do much true good. The saints and spiritual authors are unanimous in saying that prayer is the soul of any good work. Without prayer our good works are “sounding brass”, that is, noise makers without value. Therefore, all active religious absolutely must have regular and



Brothers preparing the garden by planting and setting irrigation for this summer's harvest. "Heaven and earth", says St. Augustine, "tell me to love Thee"

serious prayer as part of their daily life.

Another way of looking at this same truth is to consider it from the point of view of grace. Grace is what gives anything in this world value in God's eyes. God's grace is what makes us pleasing to Him and makes our works pleasing to Him. Now we obtain God's grace through prayer. Prayer is that living contact with God. For God to use us as His instruments we must be in contact with Him. *"I am the vine, you are the branches," "Without me you can do nothing"*. Unless we preserve and seek to increase our contact and life with Christ, we will not have the grace for our good works to bear true fruit. Thus the importance of a regular and serious prayer life for everyone desiring to be an apostle or instrument in doing good to others.

Certain people have understood this well. However, at times they take this truth too far when they claim that only those well-advanced in the spiritual life should undertake the active works of the apostolate. Now, there is no doubt that such advanced souls will draw down many more graces from God, but this does not mean that those less perfect cannot also do some good to others.

There is no reason to wait until one has reached sanctity before devoting oneself to good works. This is confirmed by Our Lord Himself. We see Him send-

ing His disciples out to preach the Gospel in Galilee from the very beginning of His ministry, when they were evidently still very imperfect. The founders of the great Religious Orders have done the same; such as St. Francis, St. Dominic, and St. Ignatius. After a period of initiation, they sent out their sons to conquer the world by their preaching and missions. It was by the help of these works of the apostolate that the majority of them attained great virtue and perfection.

Without giving sufficient thought to history or experience, some Christians, who are naturally inclined to a life of solitude, have maintained that retirement and many years of monastic life are necessary in order to attain to perfection. However, if such was the case, then Our Lord was mistaken when He told the crowds, *"Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."* These words were addressed to everyone, and not everyone is free to live a life of solitude. As St. Thomas Aquinas says, *"It is more perfect to give to others the fruits of contemplation than simply to contemplate, just as it is a better thing to let others have the benefit of our lamp than to keep it for ourselves alone."* Or as St. John of the Cross says, *"Devotion to the neighbor is a fruit of the spiritual and contemplative life."*

This being said, active religious, as well as active



Father Kenneth Dean, with priests and brothers blesses the orchard on the Rogation Day. There are one hundred trees of various fruits for the harvest.

lay people, must be careful not to put the cart before the horse. Action may appeal more to folks by reason of their active temperament, or their upbringing, or their compulsively active habits – but it is not activity itself which is the more perfect thing. The words of St. John of the Cross are very much to the point here, *“Some spiritual people give the preference to activity and imagine that they can conquer the world by their preaching and their external works. Let them remember that they will render greater service to the Church if they use even half the time which they thus fritter away, in prayer before God, because then they will do more with less labor, and more by one prayer-inspired work than by a thousand [others]. To act otherwise, by preferring only those works which excite noise and admiration, is to make noise, to do something which is almost nothing...”*

According to one learned Dominican, Fr. Petitot, *“The most difficult temptation to evade in all ages and especially in our own, is that which, under the pretext of zeal and charity towards God and the neighbor, causes souls called to a superior and holy religious life, to fall into unrest and agitation.”* This danger has been labeled ‘activism’. It consists in almost continually giving oneself to a multitude of works (even of apostolate) with a kind of fevered activity. It degenerates into restlessness and is fatal to contemplation.

We are not guilty of activism if we have a lot to do. We are guilty of it, if we seek to do things to avoid praying, and consider our time better spent in “doing something” rather than in praying. The way St. Teresa of Avila put it, *“One should not give all one’s time to good works except through obedience, because otherwise it is preferable to have one’s moments of solitude.”* Yet this is what many souls who allow themselves to be drawn into a too active life, fail to do. *“They have accustomed themselves to living in a kind of fever, which they love and which they seek even while they deplore it. They shun instinctively the state of recollection and peace, which is a weariness to them.”*

From this we might conclude that most persons, whether religious or laymen, would be better off in a monastery or convent. Once again to quote Fr. Petitot, O.P., *“This attraction towards the contemplative life is much commoner than is supposed, among pious souls, but with the majority of them it is a form of deception. It gives the illusion of having a true vocation for contemplation, for prayer, for detachment from all things, for submission to an austere discipline, but such a feeling is a mirage which never has power to inspire effective decisions...with such beautiful wishing, one can live to the end of one’s life, though protesting, in the whirl of the world and in lukewarmness of soul.”*



St. Francis de Sales once said to a fellow-bishop who expressed the desire to live in a monastery, “*Solitude is good when God calls us to it: otherwise, it is bad. You suppose that it offers less occasions of sin, but man finds himself wherever he goes, and misery hounds him like his own shadow.*” In the end we can never get away from self. It is the most dangerous of all our spiritual enemies. That’s why all escapes from self and the problems coming from self, are doomed to failure.

Good works, especially works of charity, however, are not another form of escape. By helping others, we indirectly help ourself. By thinking of others we do the best thing for ourself. That’s why if entering a monastery or convent has the effect of making us think too much of self, then evidently, we are not being called to the contemplative life. Many souls,

through the aid of good works done for their neighbor along with faithful prayer, can reach a relatively high union with God.

There is an old Latin proverb which says, ‘*fabricando fit faber*’. It means that one who makes things learns his skill by actually making things. The same truth can be applied to many things: one learns to cook by cooking; one learns to play a musical instrument by playing; one learns to pray by praying. So also in the active religious life, one learns to perform works of the apostolate well by performing them often. Quantity, when it is not excessive, is therefore good and it improves the quality. It is also true, in general, that a fruitful apostolate consisting of many good works, disposes us towards contemplation, so long as these works do not absorb all of our time and are not exhausting. This is the experience of the saints.



When St. Augustine looked at the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the rivers, they appeared to him to speak, and say: “Augustine, love your God for he has created us for you, that you might love Him.”

Holy Angels Novitiate is the house of formation for the Brothers of the Society of Saint Pius X in the United States.

The Brothers of the Society are religious dedicated to the glory of God through the service of His priests. They accomplish this primarily through the observance of the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—the foundations of Catholic religious life through the centuries—by their prayers and by their example. They also assist the priests of the Society in their apostolates in many different ways according to the needs of each individual priory. Brothers are currently engaged in teaching catechism, serving Mass, maintaining sacristies, and directing choirs. They also care for the material needs of the priests by cooking, performing maintenance, accounting, and completing innumerable small but useful tasks.

Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of Saint Pius X and its Brothers, recognized the dignity and value of the Brothers' vocation when he exhorted them to be the "guardian angels of our communities." It was his wish that each priory of the Society would eventually have a resident religious Brother. This wish can only be realized through the selfless response of many souls to Christ's call together with the generosity of our benefactors. God will certainly reward all of them abundantly.

Donation Information

Please make out checks or money orders in US dollars only to: "Holy Angels Novitiate."

Holy Angels Novitiate

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—Please do not send cash since this is against US Postal Regulations.

Upcoming Events

Retreats:

Men (Vocations): July 5-10

Men: August 23-28

Brothers: September 20-27

Brothers Vows:

September 29th

Visit Our New Website:

holyangels-novitiate.com/en