



S S P X



Holy
Angels
novitiate



Almighty and eternal God, I adore Thee, and I thank Thee for all the benefits which Thou, in Thy infinite goodness and mercy, hast conferred upon me. Amen



Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Greetings from Winona. Spring has finally arrived. In this season God has made His firm commitment to annually bring forth flowers, greenery, colors of all kinds and fresh life into our world. The beauty is outstanding. God is faithful to his commitments. It is a lesson for mankind.

Unfortunately, in our modern day making commitments seems to get harder for both men and women. In the Boy Scouts only five percent of boys who enter scouting will fight their way to becoming an Eagle Scout, its highest rank. It is estimated that 1.2 million students annually drop out of high school in the United States, where high school graduation rates rank 19th in the world. Young men cannot commit to a career. Many youth today operate by happenstance ...no plan...no goals set...they do not seek to act for an end or ideal. One goes along in life until "something comes my way." Maturity of men and women has been for decades on the decline. The Peter Pan mentality continues unabated...no one wants to grow-up...take responsibility or make commitments.

Does not God call us to something higher? To put our light on a candle stand so that it may be seen? As Catholics, we are indeed called to act for the highest ideals; to commit ourselves to serve Christ in some way; whether that ideal is to get married and raise saints or be a teacher to educate the youth to raise their ideals, or even higher, to seek a religious vocation. More than ever today we need the youth to stand up. To act for a noble ideal; a heroic end.

What will you do in life to serve God? Faith enlightens the intellect to aim at the ideal. "Love Serves" says St. Bernard. Pray and ask God for light. The youth should be seeking advice from their pastor, their parents, and their wise Catholic relatives. What are your talents that God gave you? Use them, embellish them. Make a commitment. It is man's nature to show initiative and drive; to conquer, to do the hard things; challenge oneself.

Let the beauty of spring remind you to engage your being to do your duty, do what is noble, make a commitment, accomplish your goals. At fourteen years of age Antonio Ghislieri (later Pope St. Pius V) made a commitment and entered the Dominican Order. Might the religious life be for you? Pass this newsletter to the youth and encourage them. They can stand on the shoulders of those who went before them. Let them read of the great heroes of our holy Catholic faith.

Once again, Father Kenneth Dean helps us to understand the value and balance of work. We have included in this newsletter a number of pictures of the religious brothers at work in our novitiate. As always, the brothers of the Society depend on your support. We trust in your continued support for our priests, brothers and the upkeep of our property. The brothers pray the entire rosary daily for our friends and benefactors.

Fr. Charles Ward
Rector

It is Good for Man to Work

By Fr. Kenneth Dean



The washing of a seemingly endless pile of dishes can prove to be a sanctifying task.

After creating man, the Bible tells us, “*The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*” (Gen. 2, 15). Man’s work, before he sinned, was pleasurable and satisfying. After he sinned, Adam continued to work, but it became difficult. “*...in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life...In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread.*” “*Therefore the Lord God put him out of the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.*” (Gen. 3, 19). Both before and after sin, man was meant by God to work. The difference is that what at first was enjoyable became difficult because of sin. However, despite this fact, work is still sanctifying if it is done with the grace of God and according to His will.

Religious life has always understood the importance of work in the sanctification of the soul. St. Benedict, who composed the most famous rule for monasteries, said, “To work is to pray”. He also said, “He who labors as he prays lifts his heart to God with his hands.” The ancient monastic motto: “Ora et labora” (pray and work) is the same ideal taken by all religious. The differences being in the type of work done, and the amount of time given to it.

The Brothers of the Society of St. Pius X certainly work. During their formation years, the postulants or novices will spend at least three hours a day in some kind of manual labor. Once the brother makes profession, he may easily spend double that time each day working. The type of work he does and the variety of his tasks are many. His working hours, of course, are offset by the time he spends in prayer and spiritual reading. This also constitutes several hours each day. The result is meant to be a balance good for both body and soul.



Brother Stanislaus carefully measures ingredients in his latest batch of home-brewed beer.

A brother scales the heights to repair ailing light fixtures.



The brothers work to repair the lights and to lay a new tile floor in the Novitiate buildings.

There are two opposing errors held by many people concerning physical work. The first is that physical labor is something degrading, something unworthy of modern man. Such people often glory in pounding away at a computer keyboard but abhor the thought of pounding with a hammer. They make the mistake of equating what is physical with what is bad, or at least less honorable. This was the attitude of the pharisees, who could not bring themselves to believe Jesus was the Messiah because He was a manual laborer, *“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?”* they said of Christ in disgust.

Against this notion, the saints have stressed the importance of work, especially manual labor. St. Paul told the Thessalonians: *“For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us...[we] worked*

with labor and toil night and day, so as not to be a burden upon any of you...For indeed, when we were with you we gave you this command, that if anyone would not work neither should he eat.” II Thes. 3, 7-10. St. Vincent de Paul said, “Let us love God, but with the strength of our arms, in the sweat of our brow.” And the little patroness of cooks, St. Zita said, “All devotion that leads to sloth is false. We must love work.”

The opposite error is held by others. These think that physical labor is the only “real” work, and that those who spend considerable time in mental or spiritual tasks are wasting their time and not being productive. This error is condemned by Pope Pius XII who says, “the interior life is... a necessity for every Christian whom God calls to be saved. Without the interior life, any activity, however

praiseworthy, is debased and becomes purely mechanical.” Indeed, he goes on to say, “Unless one withdraws at least from time to time from the world, indeed for a while each day, in order to reflect quietly and peacefully on these truths in the presence of the Holy Spirit alone, will he not become infected with that restless and often sterile fever of ‘activism’, as it is called, which is more showy than fruitful?” Our founder, Archbishop Lefebvre, was keenly aware of this modern tendency towards activism. On more than one occasion he reminded his priests to prioritize their works and remember the essential, “When you have said your Mass and divine office, you have done 80% of your work”.

It is between these two extremes that all Catholics, religious or laypersons, must find their place. It is not the fact that much time is given to work or external activity itself which is condemned; no, the problem comes when the work or activity is not based on the help of grace and does not make

use of the means necessary to pursue sanctity. Thus, it is not necessarily the amount of time spent in work which is dangerous, but the lack of the spiritual means which should accompany the work and raise it to the supernatural level. Therefore Catholics who are extremely busy, but who take the time to say their prayers as best as they can, and renew a good intention or offering from time to time during the course of their occupations, are truly basing their activity on the help of grace. Once again, it is not the fact that we are ‘super busy’ which makes us guilty of activism. No, so long as there is not a lack of the accompanying prayer life to elevate all this activity. We may also add, that our work will be sanctifying for us and others if we are careful to stay in the state of sanctifying grace.

However, as we know all too well, a lot of external activity can rather easily ‘carry us away’ from our prayers and spiritual duties. How do we know if we’re given in to this activism? There are warning signs. Here are a few clear ones:

Recently acquired pigs and sheep make for interesting outdoor work (right).



The brothers work in the kitchen with skill and diligence (below) and feed the chickens their rations (below right).





Work in the laundry room and woodshop.

set aside a good time for prayer and make sure it happens. The more we are tempted to activism the more we need to make sure we pray. As very wise people have said, “We should start everyday with prayer; but on very busy days it’s an absolute necessity.”

Pope Pius XII often spoke of the necessity of maintaining a suitable balance between exterior works and the cultivation of the interior life. He stressed not only a good prayer life, but also the need and obligation of work. Indeed, he looked upon some kind of work or other as essential to growing closer to God. “The natural law obliges all to work,” he said, “whether with their hands or with their minds. Nor are men and women who belong to the contemplative life by any means exempt from this law. The duty of penance and satisfaction also imposes this obligation. Further, work is a general instrument whereby the soul is protected from dangers and is drawn to higher things; it is an instrument whereby we cooperate with Divine Providence... it is an instrument whereby the works of charity are exercised.” “The law of...’Ora et labora’, has lost none of its wisdom and of its necessity.”



- If we use almost any excuse to get out of praying
- If we look for diversions during the time needed for prayer
- If we fall into the habit of rushing our prayers or spiritual duties when there is no need to just so we can get on to other things
- If we frequently lose our peace of soul during our work or activities.

These and other similar signs would be indications that we have fallen into activism. The remedy is simple: be serious about prayer and resolve to

St. Teresa of Avila, the strictly cloistered nun and the reformer of Carmel, is known as one of the premier authors on the spiritual life. What is not so well known is the fact that the last twenty years of her life were often marked by fatiguing and distracting external activity. She personally established thirty-two Carmelite convents all over Spain. She traveled extensively, in frequent contact with the world and involved in business affairs. She certainly knew the importance of serious prayer, but she also understood the value of work, especially work done under obedience. She advised souls obliged to work, “Come, then, let there be no disappointment when obedience keeps you busy in outward tasks. If it sends you to the kitchen, remember that the Lord walks among the pots and pans and that He will help you in inward tasks and in outward ones too.”



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.

—Please call (816) 753-0073 to discuss the donation of securities or precious metals.

Upcoming Events

Summer Camp: cancelled: June 20-28

Retreats:

- Men: cancelled: June 1-6
- Men (Vocations): July 6-11
- Men: August 31 - September 5, 2005

Taking of Vows:

In Winona, Sunday September 27th