

Life in a monastery demands a great price: nothing less than complete renunciation – not only of the world and its ambitions and worries and concerns, but also of the monk’s or nun’s own judgment and tastes and will. But once the price has been paid, the reward is greater still. It takes a real man or a real woman to live such a life, but such a life lifts one above the terrors and sorrows of modern life with all its dazzlements, and elevates the soul to a superhuman level, to the peace and quiet found above the clouds where the storms of human existence are unable to cause any disturbance. Only those who have tasted the joy that can be in the heart and soul of the monk or nun are able to answer the question, “What is your aim? How do you reach what you aim for?” The answer cannot be found in a book – any book!

Penance, fasting, and mortification are not ends in themselves. If monks or nuns never succeed in being nothing more than religious athletes, they do not fulfill their purpose in the Church, especially today. If anyone wants to understand why monastics lead the life they do, they will have to go to the monk or nun and ask, “What is your aim?”

The very thought of a life of silence and prayer and work, especially today, scares most people to sickness. A life without noise? Unthinkable! The modern system of communication allows for constant conversation – continuous conversation that is mostly inane and totally trivial and meaningless. When the world – even the Catholic world – looks at the nun’s dress, the apparel proper for a woman who has walked out of the world, they wonder. The modesty of the nun offends the shameless immodesty of woman today; therefore it is hated and ridiculed. So the wonderment about monastic life becomes ever more magnified. When worldly minded people look at a monastery and find well-educated men working in the fields and professional men of the world repairing lawnmowers, they become disoriented. They look about and they see fully grown, educated men, all jolly and full of fun, stopping to laugh at the frolics of a chipmunk, pausing to enjoy the antics of birds and kittens and chickens, bending over to pluck some tiny wildflower simply to enjoy its beauty, and they shake their heads in exasperation, not understanding. To the man of the market place, all full of business acumen, computer obsessions, money marketing expertise, and other such “matters of consequence,” the monk stands out as someone quite strange and out of place. If asked about the life he lives, the monk will probably give an answer not easy for a man who works in the market place to understand – indeed, it will make their blood run cold.

One thing becomes quickly evident, however. The men who live in monasteries and the women who live in convents have not joined such places in order to escape from the realities of life, but rather to find the realities of life. They are certainly not people disappointed in love. They are certainly not deviates. How can a man or woman given entirely to companionship with God be deviant? True monastics have come to the realization that the life as seen and lived in the world of today is entirely dedicated to the pursuit of shadows. The monastic wants more out of life than the empty shadows of “fun and pleasure” and creature comfort! Of what use are the commodities of the world, after all is said and done? Men and women become monastics because they have come to the full understanding of the importance of a world where peace, joy, blessedness, and holiness can overrule a world of fun and pleasure and the abuse of the ordinary laws of God; a world of unfulfilled effort.

Men and women who live in rather close and highly regulated conditions know quite well that even in a restricted way of life such as is in a monastery or convent, they enjoy a freedom that is unknown to those whose lives are dominated and restricted by business, money, and worldly sin. The clean and free and unselfish love of the monks and nuns does not live on what such ones get out of life, but what such ones give to life. Theirs is a kind of love that pours itself out to others, a love that grows and becomes ever more intense. It is a life where sacrifice becomes strangely mighty by throwing itself away. The giving of such men and women is important because it fills whatever blank places exist in the lives of those whose lives prevent them from being totally given to God as He desires. It is the example of the prayer life and of the work life of monks and nuns that gives courage and inspiration to God’s holy people and makes them more fully fulfilled in their service. It is the hidden life of an unknown monk or an unknown nun in a distant monastery or convent that often enough makes saints of those good people who do not live in monasteries and convents and who are forced to earn their bread in the streets of the City of Babylon. □

1. **CATECHISM CLASS:** Children 6 to 14 please meet Father Joseph in the vestibule right after the 10:00 Mass.
2. There will be 5:00 PM Sunday Vespers with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament this afternoon.
3. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-ins of our Chapels. LET US ALSO PRAY FOR EVERYONE.
4. **MASSES FOR THE WEEK:** (Father Abbot Leonard’s schedule only)

SUNDAY:	For the People of our Chapels
MONDAY:	Welfare of John Maffei
TUESDAY:	For the Poor Souls (for intention of donor)
WEDNESDAY:	Deceased Manuel Gomez
THURSDAY:	Special intention Bob Preston
FRIDAY:	For the Poor Souls in Purgatory
SATURDAY:	Special intention Peter Schmitz-Hille ( <i>Birthday</i> )