

Books have been written to show the way in which Western Monasticism influenced the life and thought of Western Civilization. The question now arises: HOW CAN MONASTICISM INFLUENCE THE LIFE AND THOUGHT WHICH PREVAILS IN TODAY'S CHURCH AND WORLD?

Monks today are no longer in a position, as they were in the AGES OF FAITH, to bring direct pressure to bear upon contemporary civilization. Therefore, it is important to determine the kind of contribution they still can bring. It is important to see how far this contribution is affected by the PREVAILING SPIRIT caused by the INVASION OF MODERNISM AND THE SO-CALLED NEW AGE!

Monasteries can help to a certain extent in the general development of modern mankind, but externally their field is more limited than it has ever been. This is not the fault of Monks or of the Monastic system; it is the fault and the fact of secularization. These are not the ages of faith. Rather they are the ages of unfaith! Also, competition in an increasingly materialistic age from non-religious (governmental in too many instances) forces and institutions, has reduced to negligible proportions the DIRECT contribution which Monasticism can make to civilization in today's world. What is done in the way of Monastic scholarship, social welfare, education and agriculture can reach only a very limited and specially conditioned public. Monastic institutions simply cannot compete with modern secular or state institutions. Neither should Monastic institutions be inclined to think that they can be in competition with today's mega-corporations when it comes to the selling of the products they feel able to produce. The Monastic institution must be willing to face the fact that it is no longer supposed to. "Let Caesar do what Caesar is equipped to do, and let the Monastery do what the Monastery is equipped to do."

It is not in outward activities that the real STRENGTH of the Monastic life lies. The DIRECT contribution is not, and NEVER HAS BEEN, the main purpose of Monastic existence. The main thing has ever been the INDIRECT contribution made by HOLY Monks and Nuns, in their E X A M P L E OF PRAYER, PENANCE, WORK AND HUMBLE OBEDIENCE. Where the Monks and Nuns help their neighbors in the world is not primarily where they find a public waiting and responding to them, but where THEY FIND THEIR OWN SOULS WAITING AND RESPONDING IN THE HIDDEN SERVICE OF GOD. It is not by the benefits conferred upon man in the way of culture, education, science, agriculture, hospitality, or even in the way of parochial work, that Monasteries are JUSTIFIED in any age or place. Monasteries (Monks and Nuns) are justified ONLY by the love of God which animates them and the fidelity with which THEY KEEP TO THEIR PURPOSE. The Mon, together with his Abbot, who loves God perfectly is fulfilling every obligation which in CHRISTIAN CHARITY HE OWES TO HIS NEIGHBOR. It is on this assumption that the whole and entire idea of Benedictine Monasticism rests!!!

THE MONASTIC EXAMPLE IS THE SOLE REMAINING INGREDIENT CAPABLE OF BRINGING BOTH THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD BACK INTO THE CITY OF GOD!!!!!!