

The call which comes from God and is sent out to every man — whether in religion or out in the world — is ultimately a call to be perfect in these two loves. These two loves do not replace other obligations or the other Commandments. They do not make the other Laws of God recede into the background. To understand or to try to practice them APART from all the Commandments of God or the Rule which governs any well established religious institute is sheer folly. These two loves are the VERY SPIRIT of the Commandments! These two loves are the VERY SPIRIT of the Rule observed in any convent or monastery. These two loves are NOT SOMETHING APART FROM OR SOMETHING WHICH IS ADDED TO THE ORDINARY OBSERVANCE! They are the spirit of the Gospels; of all spiritual literature and all spiritual directives, and of every message God sends to our hearts. Without the spirit of these two loves, every spiritual message is dead! Every sermon, every book, every writing, every suggestion, every thought, every program, every cause, if it is not established firmly on the foundation of the spirit of these two loves it is dead! — no matter how eloquent or scholarly its presentation. Wherever the spirit of these two loves is missing, there is nothing more than the ever popular “LUV”. Remember: the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life. Today, it seems, it is the law that is being presented to the people! Sad to say, this is true in some of our traditional Roman Catholic circles. Perhaps, that is the reason why many people are too obsessed about their spiritual condition, and are sometimes found to do some rather bizarre things in their frenzied efforts to prove themselves acceptable to a “harsh and severe Judge”. With these souls there is no peace of soul to be found. They forget, that while God is indeed a just judge, He is also a merciful Judge.

Every person, whether a lay person in the world, or a religious person in vows, must work out his or her salvation in mingled fear and hope. But no man has been given any guarantee of his salvation.

The only thing that distinguishes the religious person from the lay Christian is this: that the religious enforce their obligation to achieve perfection with a VOW. The pursuit of perfection is the life work of the religious, and the religious institute in which he or she lives is under grave obligation to provide every opportunity, every support, every bit of nourishment required for the achievement of perfection. There is a type of contract between the religious person and the religious institute. Since Vatican Council II it seems that both the party of the first part and the party of the second part have mutually agreed to dissolve the terms of the contract. Witness what happened to both convent and monastery in the past thirty years. Witness the religious atmosphere that surrounds both priest and nun in these our times!

Whereas the pursuit of perfection is the full time occupation of a religious under vow, most lay Catholics — even the very serious ones — aim at perfection only from time to time (example during the season of Lent). The average lay person does not make the attainment of perfection his or her main occupation. The layman is distracted by the usual cares of the world. Even the legitimate interests and concerns of life occupy his thoughts. The religious freely binds himself under pain of sin not to abandon his quest for perfection by returning to any of the