

Such a man is a Priest . . .

The PRIEST is a man of prayer. Of all men, the priest is THE man of prayer. The priest, who, each morning, brings down the God of all Creation and places Him on the Altar of Mercy and Sacrifice, is the one man of all men on earth chosen to give praise and thanksgiving to the God of infinite majesty, and he does this in the name of all men. The heart of the priest embraces all men — not just certain men. His heart embraces all men. In every way like his Master, Who saw all of mankind from the heights of His Cross of Suffering, the priest's prayer is for all mankind. The light that illuminates the intellect and the grace that stirs the Heart of Man do not come from the priest, these are in the possession of God. But it is the prayer of the priest that brings these wondrous gifts down from heaven. All those apostolic priests who, in their day and time, brought about such tremendous conversions, were men of prayer. And so shall it still be! It is not in his debating, neither shall it be in his proving that the priest shall turn the Heart of any Man. Only by the prayer of the priest shall this be done. In the silence of his oratory, or at the foot of the Altar, in the solitude of his monastery, the priest draws from heaven — by his fervent and sincere prayer — those vivid lightnings and divine thunderbolts by which sinners are subdued and cast prostrate at the foot of the Cross. It is in the silence of his prayer that the priest speaks loudest. It is by prayer that the priest causes the sinner to do something about his sin, thereby making himself right for the grace of God to work in his soul. Prayer is the weapon of the priest. The priest has to be supernatural, as it were, so that he can rise to the heights of the Supernatural. The priest is like a bird which takes flight and soars aloft to God — high above the clouds where he can have conversation with his God. The prayer of the priest, like the wings of the eagle, bears him away to the spaces above. Cut the wings of the bird and it falls to earth and flutters in the dust. So it is with the priest without prayer!

The priest is a solitary. The priest must love solitude and silence, both of which are necessary for prayer. Solitude and silence can sometimes be a trial to the priest's natural inclinations. After all, to live is to act, and when he gives no external expression to human activity, when he is not actively engaged in the affairs of men, it is possible for the priest to be persuaded that he is doing nothing, and that his life is being wasted. How sad it is when these are the thoughts of a priest.

The priest — the monk — cares not to see, and prefers not to be seen, who, in so far as duty and charity permit, keeps aloof from the world and its excitement, such a one makes his room a temple of which he is the priest. His oratory is a sanctuary. His monastery a refuge. The heart of the priest is an ever-burning lamp of love, which consumes itself in the presence of the living God. The prayer of the priest is incense whose fragrance is continually going up to the Throne of Mercy — seeking Mercy and Joy and Peace.

Such a man is a priest! Such a man is truly a blessing to souls — indeed such a man is a treasure beyond price! Such a man knows only to toil for the honor and glory of God! Such a man speaks out to all men — out of the fullness of his heart! Such a man's words have the power of Angels, and his words will be a fountain welling up from the Spring of Life which is within him!

Such a man is a priest!