

U. I. O. G. D.

The Benedictine Rule – indeed the Benedictine Spirit – as stressed in the Monastery of Christ the King, finds its inspiration from the life of Benedictine Monks as lived in the best American and European Abbeys. The manner of life lived by our Monks comes from the manner of life lived by the countless Benedictine Monks of better times. Personal preference does not play any part in determining the manner of life lived in this Monastery. That would be altogether wrong.

Ours is a practical Benedictine life, suited for the cloister and yet such that can be of some use to the distorted vision of modern man. Even though we monks must seek after personal perfection, we must not lose sight of the serious obligation to come to the help – as best we can as monks – of all mankind. A good and accurate monastic example, in today's world is important beyond understanding.

In a very special way, also, the monk must have much concern for those Brothers of his whose vocation has led them to work amongst, around and in the mire of the world, but who do not enjoy the protection of the contemplative life of the monastic world. It is the prayer and the sacrifice of the monks that irrigates the field of the laborers, so that while they are cultivating the Lord's field, they might gather better fruit. Without the support of the prayer and the sacrifice and the penance and the acts of reparation of the contemplative monks and nuns who live in monasteries and convents, the laborers and the evangelizers who work in the world would reap a much less bountiful harvest.

The field in which the contemplative monk lives must also be irrigated. Silence is its irrigation. A monastery without silence is a monastery that needs help. We do not here speak of total silence as lived by religious of other monastic orientations. In a world of much activity and in a world where isolation is no longer possible, silence cannot be practicably and as strictly enforced as it was in earlier ages. Besides, St. Benedict did not request a total silence in his monasteries. Total silence came into being at a later date, and even then communication continued, if not by speech, at least by sign language.

The monk must place himself in an atmosphere of silence – interior silence – and if this is missing monastic spirituality is not possible. The unending flow of mail, the ever ringing telephone, the constant coming and going of guests are unavoidable, and must be attended to with kindness, generosity and charity. But they are distractions nonetheless for the contemplative monk. Distracted or not, the monk of today can no longer enjoy the luxury of pure contemplative silence and build a high wall around his life of contemplation. The wilderness of today must include people – priests and people – who need the warmth and the peace that radiates from a family of monks whose