

the monk is in close Communion with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is at this point that we find the end result of the monk's Profession of his Vows – which are Obedience, Stability and Conversion of Life. When the monk makes his Profession, he gives of himself entirely to God. At that very instant God gives of Himself to the monk: This is an exchange that cannot be measured in human terms.

The monk is not an extraordinary man. He is a very ordinary man. In monasteries we find only ordinary men – weak men, strong men, refined men, rough men, educated men, uneducated men, mechanics, those who can sing and those who cannot sing – all good men. St. Benedict instructs the abbot to accommodate himself to – “a variety of characters”. But isn't it wonderful how this variety of characters can all kneel together, pray together, eat together, work together, live together – their only ambition and desire and love in life being THE GREATER GLORY OF THEIR GOOD GOD!! This is something that everyone who confesses to be a laborer in the Vineyard of Jesus Christ must think seriously about.

Scholarship is not stressed in our monastery. Erudition is not looked upon as a necessary monastic virtue. Besides, what is the value of erudition in today's computerized world? The monks study the riches of Scripture and Tradition, but not as specialists. They study the riches of Scripture so that they can come to a closer understanding and a closer union with the God they love so much. The monk of this monastery is more a contemplative than he is a scholar, and because of that, he learns much about his God from the most unbelievably simple and unsophisticated things as St. Thomas did from the Crucifix.

Labor is very evident in the life of the monks. Much labor. Labor which requires great sacrifice and dedication, but the work is not so prolonged and arduous as to dull the monk's potentialities for contemplation. In his work, the monk is not concerned about his personal fame and importance. He strives to be anonymous, a characteristic that marks the Benedictine achievements of former glorious days.

The monastery is a place where every effort, every work, every prayer becomes a means for the salvation of the monk. The monastery is where humble hearted men make proper use of the material things God has given them. A Benedictine Monastery is a place where humility is preserved by the sense of one's own limitations and the limitations of the materials one is forced to use because of Holy Monastic Poverty. No attempt is made to make a cheap thing look costly. That would be fakery, and all the works of the monastery have to be totally genuine. Well done – certainly – but always genuine. Whatever is poor will glorify God by the splendor of its poverty. Besides, whatever is poor and full of poverty, if the work is the result of hard effort, of love and sincerity and obedience to God –

WHAT BETTER IS THERE TO GIVE?