

# OF CONTEMPLATION

Every Monk tries to give himself entirely and without compromise to whatever work God wants to perform in him and through him. Such an intention is truly a gift of God, but such a gift is not to be taken as something absolutely blind and without definition. It is already defined by the fact that God gives each Monk a CONTEMPLATIVE vocation. By doing so God has signified a certain goal, a very certain path that each Monk should take. The true and good Monk knows full well that such is the will of God, and therefore this must ALWAYS be the point of view of the Monk. With God as his preference, the Monk understands quite well that he must renounce all business arrangements, all ambitions, honors, pleasures, friends, relatives, and every other career oriented activity that pertains to life in the world. He will have only a minimum of concern with temporal things.

The Monk promises to do whatever a Superior may legitimately ask of him. That may, under certain circumstances, involve the sacrifice of contemplation. Such a sacrifice, in most cases, is only a temporary thing, and not the sacrifice of the whole of a contemplative vocation as such. Should one become concerned with such a condition of Monastic Life, all one need do is read the Rule of Saint Benedict, and such a one will quickly learn that the Rule of Saint Benedict is NOT ordered to a life of pure contemplation. It might well be said that the Benedictine Life is active, insofar as it involves labor, asceticism, and an active glorification of God in a variety of activities. (A special note, here, might well be in place. Most Benedictine Abbeys, especially in America, have taken on the activity of running colleges, and universities. To be sure, this has proven to be an unhealthy path to take, and has had serious and secularistic effects on the whole of Benedictine Monastic Life. Benedictine Contemplative Life cannot co-exist with modern college campus life. Such activity must be classified as unsuited to the Contemplative-Prayer life of the Monk.)

The important thing is, however, not to live for contemplation but to live for God. This is obvious, because, after all, is that not the contemplative vocation? That is why it is best to take religious obedience quite literally. As soon as obedience is tempered with