

EXTERNALS

The danger among many people today who strive to return to the Catholicism handed down to them by our ancestors is that in most cases true Catholic experience is either outside the limits of their recall or it is totally unknown to them. These people have been separated from orthodox observance for such an extended period of time that it is faded to the point of unintelligibility. To the young (those born after 1970) it is not known at all and completely foreign to them. When, finally, such people become aware of their departure from true Catholicism, when they hear of it – willynilly – they fasten on to random doctrine, or on to some out-moded and manufactured religious observance or ritual – (something they have read someplace – or – something that someone has said) and then they wrench it from its context, and apply it as if it were a poultice. Usually armed with computerized information they cleave with sophomoric tenacity to matters they have no experiential knowledge of. Many of these good priests and people alike, more often look at the EXTERNALS of our holy traditional and ancestral religion to the detriment of a deep, sincere and saintly spirituality. Errors of this kind can be caused by a wrong understanding of the function of symbolism: the emblem can come to mean more than the truth which it represents. In truth, symbols are most important, but they are not meant to take the place of the mysteries they bring to life and light. Is it any wonder, then that one can fail to grow spiritually while employing and enjoying all of the good and proper (and traditional and ancestral, but quite often manufactured) representations of true Catholicism.

At the present moment we are calling to mind the Resurrection of our Lord and Redeemer. We have to look at the Resurrection with all of its reality. If the Resurrection fails to produce among Christians the sanctity which might be expected, it is not the fault of the Resurrection. It is the fault of the Christian who gets no further than the heavy stone of the Holy Sepulcher. He seems to see only the scenes or symbols of the Resurrection. He gives nothing to the greatness of the Resurrection of our Most Holy Redeemer but a superficial devotion to its symbols and empty externalisms. The Resurrection is a grace to the soul, and if the soul is to benefit from It, the soul must give a response at the same level: IT MEANS GIVING! Christ is the central figure, giving out and drawing in. And it must be Christ with us as He was always with our ancestors – the only inspiration which motivated them to do the things they did. Besides, the Resurrection is not Christ's victory alone – it is ours as well.



A view of the new but unfinished Carpenter Shop – next to the barn.