

familiar with only picture book or cassette tape descriptions of monastic religious life – are quite often disappointed when on arrival they do not find monks transported to the heights of contemplation, and when they come face to face with Monastic Obedience and work, many of them leave and continue their vain search for that place where monastic unreality exists.

True inwardness – true spiritual life – or conscious union with God is fundamentally not a matter of thought or mental process at all, but rather a matter of the will. It is not a succession of acts. As said above, it is not a doing – a running from one spiritual process to another spiritual process. It is an attitude, a condition, an endless, an unchangeable state of LOVE for God; it is a total trust in God; it is a complete SUBJECTION to God's command and Holy Will.

There should be, also, a constant alertness for the quiet and soft Voice of God, which makes itself known to us in countless unmistakable ways: promptings, impulses, reminders, warnings, sensations of conscience, voices of our superiors, our parents, our teachers, our government officials and all the rest. Inwardness – the interior life – is a constant STATE of constant prayer. The Interior life is built upon a permanent soul-attitude involving the subordination of our will to the Will of God – an attitude grounded in an all-embracing, loving Faith which, without effort, habitually sees God, God's Will, God's Providence, God's Love in absolutely everything. In occurrences, in duties and difficulties, in sickness and in health, in happiness and in sadness, in all things – the ears of the Interior Soul hear the Voice of God. Always alert, the Soul is ready to accept every circumstance as being directed by the Hand of God. At God's invitation the Soul responds, if not in act, at least in readiness and in a perpetual attitude of agreement. To such a Soul, its only interest is God and in the pleasure of God – never of self. Such a soul is ever ready to bear sufferings; it is quite ready to endure pain and is grateful when it receives pain; it accepts inconvenience, sacrifice, burden, hard work, difficulty, humiliation, isolation, failure or anything that God may choose to send it. In this "state of constant prayer" we do not NEED to spend our time a-thinking of God. God does not expect such. The interior Soul does not necessarily preoccupy itself with the constant recitation of prayers while it is preoccupied with the work at hand: in the marketplace, on the airplane, in the office, in the school room; driving the car, scrubbing, cooking, boating, painting, mountain climbing, sewing, typing, swimming, or kneeling at prayer. The essential thing here is that our will – our heart – is forever turned towards God, happily content to avoid any thing that might offend God or give Him pain, always seeking only that which will give Him pleasure. □

*God is gained by something we become
rather than by the uncoordinated things
which we do - not by external acts
but by inner change -*